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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

8 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CXCII.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM THURSDAY, NINTH DAY OF JULY, 1908,
TO TUESDAY, TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF JULY, 1908.

TENTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1908.

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CHRONOLOGY OF "THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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THE STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5).

Also the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with : —Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1

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Camborne Water Bill.—Read 3^{a}, and passed 2

Manchester Corporation Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Blackburn Corporation Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Stradbroke be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Monk Bretton; read, and agreed to 2

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed 2

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Falkirk and District Water. Was presented by the Lord Herschell; read 1^{a}; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Section 7) deemed to have been read 2^{a}; and reported from the Committee. [No. 135] 2

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Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 3

Thrift and Credit Banks Bill [H.L.]—House in Committee (according to order).

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Lord Denman 3

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 5, to leave out the words 'having for its object,' and insert the words '(hereinafter referred to as a thrift and credit bank), whose rules provide that its object shall be.'"—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Denman 4

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out from the word 'benefit' to the end of the clause, and to insert the words '(either alone or in conjunction with trading on co-operative principles may, on complying with the provisions of this Act, be registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act).)'"—(*Lord Denman.*)

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Lord Wenlock 11
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Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*Lord Herschell*).

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On Question, Bill read 3ª, and passed.

Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill [Second Reading].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Donoughmore 19

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Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

Lord Allendale 24
The Earl of Camperdown 24
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Lord Haversham 28
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On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday the 21st instant.

Endowed Schools (Masters) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª on Tuesday next 32

Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.].—Amendment reported (according to order.)

The Lord Chancellor 32

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 19, after the word 'shall,' to insert the words 'if His Majesty so directs.'"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, lines 22 and 23, to leave out the words 'the Judicial Committee Amendment Act, 1895, and this Act,' and to insert the words 'this section.'"—*The Lord Chancellor.*

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 23, to leave out the word 'seven,' and to insert the word 'two,' and to leave out from the word 'time' to the end of the subsection.'"—*The Lord Chancellor.*

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next, and to be printed as amended. [No. 134.]

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill. [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Allendale 33

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Allendale.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

Police (Superannuation) Bill. [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Newton 34

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Newton.*)
The Lord Steward (Earl Beauchamp) 34

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

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THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1903.

Lord Cranmore and Browne 35
Lord Denman 37

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 9TH JULY, 1908

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bristol Corporation Bill [LORDS] (KING'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 38

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next 38

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time To-morrow 38

Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed ... 38

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 39

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to:—Leeds Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords.]

Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills ... 39

PETITIONS.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 39

Daylight Saving Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 39

Licensing Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 39

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 39

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Transvaal—Papers relating to the form of Contract in use in connection with the recruitment of Native Labourers for the Transvaal Mines in Portuguese East Africa; to lie upon the Table 40

Deer Forests (Highland Crofting Counties).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 220] 40

Board of Education.—Regulations for Technical Schools, Schools of Art and other forms of provision of further Education in England and Wales; to lie upon the Table 40

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Mint.—Thirty-eighth Annual Report of the Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Mint, 1907; to lie upon the Table 40

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Inquiry into Charities (County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto; to be printed. [No. 221] 40

Inquiry into Charities (County of Berks).—Further Return relative thereto; to be printed. [No. 222] 40

Offences (Ireland).—Return ordered 40

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Prosecutions for Walking Cycles without Lights 44
Preservation of the Rate Book of Irish Poor Law Unions 45
Increased Salaries for Irish Workhouse Teachers... 46
Irish Education Grants and Assistant Teachers 46
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Post Office Savings Bank Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee C.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 223.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 223].

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 307] 97

Telegraph (Construction) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee C.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 224].

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 224.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 308] 97

Registration Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 309] 98

Public Accounts Committee.—Second Report brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 225] 98

Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 310] ... 98

Agricultural Holdings Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 311] 98

Selection (Standing Committees).—Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table 98

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NEW BILL.

Summary Jurisdiction (Scotland) Bill.

The Lord Advocate (*Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs*)... 99

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to regulate and amend the Law relating to Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Procedure in Scotland."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

Earl Winterton (*Sussex, Horsham*) 102

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 261 ; Noes, 55. (Division List No. 181.)

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

Summary Jurisdiction (Scotland) Bill.—"To regulate and amend the Law relating to Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Procedure in Scotland," presented accordingly, and read the first time ; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 312.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).—Ordered, "That the Proceedings on the Old-age Pensions Bill have precedence this day of the Business of Supply." —(*The Prime Minister.*)

Old-age Pensions Bill.—Order for the Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. Bowles (*Lambeth, Norwood*) 106
Sir Henry Craik (*Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities*) 107

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now' in order to insert the words 'upon this day three months.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir Henry Norman (*Wolverhampton, S.*) 123
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 129
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (*Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.*)... 130
Mr. Snowden (*Blackburn*) 148
Sir J. Dickson-Poynder (*Wiltshire, Chippenham*) 158
Sir Walter Nugent (*Westmeath, S.*) 163
Mr. Wedgwood (*Newcastle-under-Lyme*) 164
Viscount Morpeth (*Birmingham, S.*) 166
Mr. Fenwick (*Northumberland, Wansbeck*) 171
Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 175
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 187
Mr. Crooks (*Woolwich*) 193
Mr. Harwood (*Bolton*) 198
Mr. Hunt (*Shropshire, Ludlow*) 200

And, it being half-past Ten of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded, in pursuance of the Order of the House of 17th June, to put forthwith the Questions necessary to dispose of the Business to be concluded this day under the Order.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 315; Noes, 10. (Division List No. 182.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time accordingly, and passed.

Oyster and Mussel Fishery (Bay of Firth) Order Confirmation Bill. (BY ORDER.)—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged and Bill withdrawn."

Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 205
The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 208
Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil) 209
Mr. Dundas White (Dumbartonshire) 210

Question put, and agreed to.

Order discharged, and Bill withdrawn.

SUPPLY [8TH JULY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £167,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Educational Services, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."
2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,334,600, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."
3. "That a sum, not exceeding £868,800, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expense of Half-pay and Retired Pay to Officers of the Navy and Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."
4. "That a sum, not exceeding £377,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Civil Pensions and Gratuities, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution postponed.

Second and Third Resolutions agreed to.

Fourth Resolution to be considered upon Thursday next.

Postponed Resolution to be considered upon Thursday next 211

ADJOURNMENT.—Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Adjourned accordingly at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, FRIDAY, 10TH JULY, 1908.

Old-age Pensions Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 136] 213

House adjourned at five minutes past Three o'clock, till Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 10TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Provisional Order Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders applicable thereto complied with).—Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [Lords]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time upon Monday next ... 213

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered; Two Lords Amendments amended, and agreed to.

Remaining Lords Amendments agreed to 213

Taff Vale Railway Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 213

Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time, and committed 214

Pontypridd Water Bill [LORDS] (BY ORDER).—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 214

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 214

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—As amended considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next 214

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.—(BY ORDER).—Read the third time and passed 214

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—To confirm a Provisional Order under the Inclosures Acts, 1845 to 1899, relating to Towyn Trewan Common, in the county of Anglesey, presented by Sir Edward Strachey 214

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—Ordered, "That in the case of the Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill, Standing Order 193A be suspended, and the Bill be read the first time."—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*) 214

Commons Regulations (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under the Inclosures Acts, 1845 to 1899, relating to Towyn Trewan Common, in the county of Anglesey," accordingly read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 313] 214

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 4 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 214

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour to lie upon the Table 214

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Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 215

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Post Office Servants—Efficiency Reports 215
Liquor Licences in the United States 216
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Unnecessary Overtime of Female Postal Servants 222
Imprisonment of Women Suffragists 222
Acquisition of Untenanted Land on the McCartie Estate 223
Deductions from Salary of Teacher of Meclick National School 223
Transfer of Belfast Police Officers 224
Land Purchase Advance—Case of Mr. Richard Wallace 224
Congestion in Ireland 225
Irish Universities Bill 225
Condition of County Meath 225
Reinstatement of John Dorgan, of Graigebeg 226
Grants to Hugh Madden, of Wistown 226

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table 227

Private Bills (Group K).—Ordered, That Hugh Worthington Adams do attend the Committee on Group K of Private Bills To-morrow, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 227

Private Bills (Group K).—Sir GEORGE WHITE reported from the Committee on Group K of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties concerned, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Reports to lie upon the Table 227

ANTICIPATORY MOTIONS—A QUESTION OF PROCEDURE.

Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) 228
Lord Robert Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 231
Mr. Speaker 229–232

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 232

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, until the adjournment for the autumn holidays, Government Business be not interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the sittings of the

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House, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed; that, at the conclusion of Government Business each day, Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put; and that no Motions be made to bring in Bills under Standing Order No. 11."—(*Mr. Asquith*).

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) ... 236
Mr. Asquith ... 243
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) ... 247
Mr. Courtenay Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) ... 247
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) ... 248
Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green) ... 248
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 250
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) ... 251
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) ... 252
Mr. Seaverns (Lambeth, Brixton) ... 252
Mr. Lane Fox (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) ... 253
Mr. Leif Jones (Westmoreland, Appleby) ... 254
Sir Francis Channing (Northamptonshire, E.) ... 254
Mr. Maclean (Bath) ... 255
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 255
Mr. Asquith ... 255

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 203; Noes, 69. (Division List No. 183.)

Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [Lords].—Order for Second Reading read.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Sir H. Kearley, Devonport) ... 259

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir H. Kearley.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 261
Mr. Harmood-Banner (Liverpool, Everton) ... 262
Mr. Gordon (Londonderry, S.) ... 263
Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University) ... 264
The Solicitor-General (Sir S. Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.) ... 264

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Patents and Designs Bill [Lords].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 10, after the word 'Act,' to add the words 'or in any case where the Judge decides that a patent should be revoked.'"—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Captain Craig (Down, E.) ... 266
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) ... 266

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Bee Pest (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

The Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (*Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.*) 267

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Mr. R. Duncan (*Lanarkshire, Govan*) 267
Mr. Carlile (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) 267
Captain Craig 268

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next. —(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Whale Fisheries (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. T. W. Russell 269

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 270
Mr. Hugh Law (*Donegal, W.*) 271
Mr. Carlile 272
Captain Craig 272
Mr. Joyce (*Limerick*) 273
Mr. Barrie (*Londonderry, N.*) 273
Mr. R. Duncan 273
Mr. T. W. Russell 274
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lanarkshire, N.W.*) 275

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next. —(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Order read for consideration, as amended (by the Standing Committee).

Mr. Barrie (*Londonderry, N.*) 275
Captain Craig 276

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be re-committed to the former Committee."—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*)

Mr. John Redmond (*Waterford*) 276
The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange*) ... 277

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill, as amended, considered.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol E.*) ... 278

New clause.

"(1) The Bank of Ireland shall, out of the fund of suitors in the Supreme Court, upon the order of the Lord Chancellor, pay to the Local Government Board, for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, the sum of eighty thousand pounds. (2) The Accountant General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland shall, on the order of the Lord Chancellor, out of the new Two and a half Per Centum Consolidated Stock forming a portion of the fund of suitors in the Supreme Court and standing to the credit of the general ledger

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account kept by him for dormant balances, and the unclaimed order and residue account, Land Judge's Court transfer to the Local Government Board, for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, stock to the nominal value of one hundred thousand pounds. (3) The Local Government Board shall, on such Transfer as aforesaid being made, forthwith sell such stock so transferred and invest the proceeds thereof, together with the said sum of eighty thousand pounds, in any securities in which trustees are authorised by the Irish Land Act, 1903, to invest trust moneys, and the annual income of such investments shall be applied in the manner directed by this Act. (4) If it happens that the moneys or securities standing to the credit of the account of the suitors in the Supreme Court are at any time reduced to a sum not sufficient to meet the demands upon them or either of them, then the Treasury, so as to afford a complete indemnity to the suitors for any loss which they might sustain by reason of the passing of this Act, shall advance out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof such sum as they may think necessary, not exceeding in the whole the sum of eighty thousand pounds and the amount which would be realised at the date of such demands as aforesaid by the sale of the securities transferred in pursuance of this section, together with the dividends that would have accrued thereon if such securities had not been so transferred."—(*Mr. Charles Hobhouse.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time.

Mr. Barrie 280
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 280

Amendment proposed—

"In lines 9 and 10 to leave out the words 'and the Unclaimed order and residue account, Land Judge's Court.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Clancy (*Dublin Co., S.*) 281
Mr. Hobhouse 281
Mr. Gordon... 282
Mr. Hobhouse 282

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause added to the Bill

Mr. Cherry... 282

New Clause :—

"(1) The investments directed by Section 4 of this Act shall form and in this Act are referred to as 'the Irish Housing Fund.' (2) For the purpose of allocating and paying the annual income of the Irish Housing Fund the Local Government Board shall, in every local financial year, ascertain the amount which, as at the beginning of that year, each local authority is liable to pay in the course of that year for interest and sinking fund in respect of moneys borrowed by the authority after the passing of this Act for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts (in this section referred to as the 'annual housing charge') and shall allocate and pay the said income received during that year to and amongst the local authorities in manner following, that is to say, to each local authority liable in respect of an annual housing charge as aforesaid a sum that will bear the same proportion to the annual housing charge of that authority as the total amount of the said income so received as aforesaid will bear to the total amount of the annual housing charges of all local Authorities in Ireland, provided that the sum so payable to any local authority shall not exceed the amount of the annual housing charge of the authority. (3) Any income of the Irish Housing Fund received prior to the first day of April, nineteen hundred and nine, shall, for the purposes of this section, be treated as income received during the local financial year, which begins on that day. (4) Any sum payable to a local authority under this section shall be applied in or towards payment of the annual housing charge of the local authority. (5) So much of the annual income of the Irish Housing Fund as is not distributed under the foregoing provisions of this section shall be added to the principal of the said fund and invested accordingly."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time.

Mr. Clancy 284

Amendment proposed—

"In lines 6 and 7, to leave out the words 'for interest and sinking fund.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Cherry... 285

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, after the word 'Acts,' to insert the words 'and repayable either by annuity or by instalment.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Question "That those words be there inserted" put, and agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

New clause—

"Any town commissioners, within the meaning of Section 99 of the Act of 1890, may, if they think fit, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, adopt Part II. of the Act of 1890 in like manner as they may adopt Part III. of that Act, and any references in Section 99 or in Section 100 of the Act of 1890 to Part III. of that Act shall, for the purposes of this section, be construed as references to Part II. of that Act."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time.

Mr. Clancy... 286

Clause added to the Bill.

Mr. Clancy 286

New clause—

"Where a loan is made by the Public Works Commissioners to a local authority for any purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts as defined by this Act: (*a*) The loan shall be made at the minimum rate of interest for the time being allowed for loans out of the Local Loans Fund; and (*b*) as between loans for different periods the longer duration of the loan shall not be taken as a reason for fixing a higher rate of interest.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Brought up and read the first time.

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Sir F. Banbury 286
Mr. John Redmond 287
Mr. Gordon 288
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 288
Mr. Hobhouse 288
Mr. Barrie 288

Question put, and agreed to.

Amendments agreed to—

"In line 1, to leave out the words 'Public Works Commissioners' and to insert the words 'Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In line 3, to omit the word 'Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In line 3, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 1, lines 7 and 8, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'Public Works Commissioners,' and to insert the words 'Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. Hobhouse 289

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the word 'shall,' and insert the word 'may.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'shall' stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Clancy 290
Mr. Flavin... 290
Mr. Joyce 291
Mr. Hobhouse 291

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 14, at end to insert the words 'by the Local Government Board.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question "That these words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

Mr. Barrie 291

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out subsection (2) of Clause 1."—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'so,' in page 1, line 17, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Clancy... 292
Mr. Cherry... 292

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 1, line 17, to leave out the words 'so defined as aforesaid.'"

"In page 1, line 20, at end, to insert the words 'Borrowing powers shall, for the purposes of this section, be deemed to be exercised upon the date of the execution of the mortgage or other instrument securing the loan.'"

"In page 1, line 22, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. Barrie 292
Sir F. Banbury 293

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 26, at the end, to insert the words 'Always provided that such borrowings do not exceed the present limitations by more than one-third.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Cherry... 294

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 34; Noes, 190. (Division List No. 184.)

Captain Craig 295

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 1, to leave out Clause 3."—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'without' in page 2, line 3, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Clancy... 297
Sir F. Banbury 297
Mr. Cherry... 298

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 2, line 3, to leave out the words 'without any,' and to insert the words 'with the.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

"In page 2, line 14, at end, to insert the words 'Provided that it shall not be obligatory upon the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland to lend money to any local authority for any of the purposes authorised by this section.'"

"In page 2, to leave out Clause 4."

"In page 3, to leave out Clause 5."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Captain Craig 298

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 35, to leave out Clause 6."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'For,' in page 4, line 13, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Clancy 298
Mr. Cherry 299
Sir Henry Kimber (Wandsworth) 299
Mr. Clancy 299
Mr. Gordon... 299
Mr. Cherry 299

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 13, to leave out subsection (3), and to insert the words '(3) For the purposes of this section, Section 203 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, and Section 7 of the Act of 1890 shall have effect with the following modifications, that is to say, the advertisements mentioned in those sections respectively may be published in any month, and the notices mentioned in those sections respectively shall be served in the month next following the month in which the advertisements are published.' "—*(Mr. Cherry)*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out subsection (4)."—*(Captain Craig.)*

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 23, to leave out the word 'receive,' and to insert the words 'with the consent of the Local Government Board accept.' " —*(Mr. Cherry.)*

Amendment agreed to.

Sir F. Banbury 301
Captain Craig 302

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 26 to leave out Clause 9."—*(Sir F. Banbury.)*

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'during,' in page 5, line 28, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Gordon... 303
Mr. Clancy 303
Mr. Nannetti 304
Mr. Cherry... 304

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 157 ; Noes, 25. (Division List No. 185.)

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 5, line 28, before the word 'during,' to insert the words 'with the consent of the Local Government Board.' "—*(Mr. Cherry.)*

"In page 5, line 30, after the word 'rates,' to insert the words 'except the poor rate.' "—*(Mr. Clancy.)*

"In page 7, line 3, after the word 'Board,' to insert the words 'and as regards any land acquired from the Commissioners of Woods, subject to the consent of those Commissioners.' "—*(Mr. Hobhouse.)*

"To omit Clause 15."—*(Mr. Cherry.)*

"In page 7, line 30, at beginning, to insert the words 'In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—the expression "Local Government Board" means "the Local Government Board for Ireland;" the expression "local financial year" means "the twelve months ending the thirty-first day of March ;" the expression "purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts" means "any

purposes authorised by the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts, 1890 to 1896, or by any of those Acts, or by this Act." ' "—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

"In page 8, line 1, after the word 'suitors,' leave out the word 'of,' and insert the word 'in.' "—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Wild Birds Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) 307
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 308

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next. —(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Isle of Man (Customs Duties) Bill.—Read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next. —(*Mr. Joseph Pease*) 308

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of the cost of establishing Borstal Institutions in pursuance of any Act of the present session, to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto, and to authorise the payment to societies of any Expenses incurred by them under such Act in assisting or supervising persons discharged from a Borstal Institution."—(*Mr. Herbert Samuel.*)

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next 308

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Order of the House this day.

Adjourned at Eleven minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 13TH JULY, 1908.

NEW PEER.—John Wynford Philipps, Esquire, having been created Baron St. Davids of Roch Castle in the County of Pembroke—Was (in the usual manner) introduced 309

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—London United Tramways.

Also the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with :—Ards Railways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 309

Ards Railways Bill.—Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next 309

July 13.] Page

Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered and agreed to 309

South West Suburban Water Bill.—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The Orders made on the 8th instant discharged, and Bill committed for To-morrow 309

London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—The consent of the Prince of Wales signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 309

London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.].—The consent of the Prince of Wales, signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 309

London United Tramways Bill.—Moved, that the order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly and committed, the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 310

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 310

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 310

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 310

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to ... 310

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons, with the Amendments agreed to, with Amendments 310

London United Tramways Bill.—Reported from the Committee of Selection, That the Five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Blackburn Corporation Bill and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the London United Tramways Bill; read and agreed to. All petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the Petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bill to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bill 310

Manchester Corporation Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Blackburn Corporation Bill; Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill; River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.]; Public Offices Sites (Extension Bill).—Report from the Select Committee that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at a quarter past Eleven o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 310

Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House as the panel of Lords to act as Commisioners under the Act, viz.:—

V. Falkland;
L. Bowes (*E. Strathmore and Kinghorne*).

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly 311

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Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Herschell; read 1ª; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Section 7) deemed to have been read 2ª; and reported from the Committee. [No. 139] 311

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2ª (The Lord Herschell), and reported from the Committee. [No. 141] 311

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill [No. 142]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill [No. 143.].—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners 311

PETITION.

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—Petition in favour of; read and ordered to lie on the Table 311

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Lunacy.—Table of Contents and Appendix to the Sixty-second Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy 311

Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887.—Return of the number of eviction notices ... 312

Colonies; Annual.—No. 564. Ashanti... 312

Army.—Report of the Advisory Board, London School of Economics, on the second course at the London School of Economics, for the training of officers for the higher appointments on the Administrative Staff of the Army and for the charge of Departmental Services.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 312

Army.—Further rules of procedure for courts-martial; further regulations for the Army Reserve; further rules for military prisons and detention barracks 312

Polling Districts (County of Essex).—Order made by the council of the County of Essex 312

County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877 (Rules).—Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges regulating the mode of service of civil bill processes in ejectment, and for recovery of rent. Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906 312

Penal Servitude Acts, 1853–1891 (Conditional Licence).—Licence granted to Emilie Fritsche.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 312

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee (with Proceedings of the Committee) made, and to be printed. [No. 137.]

Bill reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next; and to be printed as amended. [No. 138] 313

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Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Read 1^{a}, and to be printed. [No. 140] 313

Patents and Designs Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to ... 313

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a} (according to Order). Amendments (Privilege) made. Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 313

SMALL HOLDINGS.

The Earl of Onslow 313
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 318
The Marquess of Lansdowne 326
The Earl of Kimberley 327

THE SPECIAL RESERVE.

Viscount Hardinge 329
The Under-Secretary of State for War (Lord Lucas) 334
Lord Raglan 334
The Marquess of Salisbury... 337
Lord Lucas 339

CIVIL SERVANTS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

The Earl of Arran.. 340

Moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Majesty for any correspondence that has passed between the War Office, the Treasury, and Heads of Departments respecting the Treasury Regulations as to leave granted to those Civil servants who belong to the Territorial Forces for the purpose of attending their annual training."—(*The Earl of Arran.*)

Lord Denman 342
The Earl of Arran... 344
The Earl of Granard 345
Viscount Middleton... 347

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a} (according to order, and passed, and sent to the Commons 350

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order). Bill reported without Amendment.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."

The Earl of Camperdown 350
Lord Allendale 350

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee.

Police (Superannuation) Bill.—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment.

Lord Newton 351

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*Lord Newton.*)

The Earl of Camperdown 351
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (The Earl of Crewe) 352
The Earl of Rosebery 352

On Question, Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^{a} To-morrow.

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WORKING OF THE IRISH LAND ACT.

Lord Clonbrock 353
Lord Denman 354
Viscount St. Aldwyn 355

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The Marquess of Lansdowne 356
The Earl of Crewe 361

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Seven o'Clock, till To-morrow half past Ten o'Clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 13TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 365

Doncaster Corporation Bill; Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill; Swinton and Mexborough Gas Bill.—Lords Amendments considered and agreed to 365

Rochester Bridge Bill. [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments 365

Barry Railway Bill [LORDS].—Not amended, considered; to be read the third time 365

Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [Lords]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 365

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—As amended, considered.
Ordered, that the Standing Orders 223 and 243 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read the third time.—(*The Deputy Chairman.*)
Bill accordingly read the third time 365

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [LORDS].—As amended considered; to be read the third time 366

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 366

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time and passed 366

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No 3) Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time and committed 366

Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time, and committed 366

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords]; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed... 366

July 13.] Page

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to:—Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill; Cambourne Water Bill, without Amendment

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords].

And also, a Bill, intituled, London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords]. 366

Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords]; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 366

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 367

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 367

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Naval Prize Money Account.—Order that the Paper relative thereto be printed, read and discharged 367

Polling Districts (County of Essex).—Order made by the County Council of the County of Essex; to lie upon the Table 367

Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887 (Eviction Notices).—Return of Eviction Notices filed; to lie upon the Table 367

East India (Army and Population).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table 367

County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877 (Rules).—Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges in Ireland regulating the mode of service of Civil Bill processes in ejectment and for recovery of rent; to lie upon the Table 367

County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877 (Rules).—Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges in Ireland under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906; to lie upon the Table 367

Colonial Reports (Annual).—Colonial Report, No. 564 (Ashanti, Annual Report for 1907); to lie upon the Table 368

Penal Servitude Acts (Conditional Licence).—Copy presented, of Licence granted to Emilie Fritsche; to lie upon the Table 368

Army.—Report of the Advisory Board, London School of Economics, on the Second Course at the London School of Economics, October, 1907, to March, 1908, for the Training of Officers for the Higher Appointments on the Administrative Staff of the Army and for the Charge of Departmental Services; to lie upon the Table 368

Army.—Further Rules of Procedure for Courts-Martial; to lie upon the Table 368

Army.—Further Rules for Military Prisons and Detention Barracks; to lie upon the Table 368

Army.—Further Regulations for the Army Reserve; to lie upon the Table ... 368

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PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.—Lunacy.—Table of Contents and Appendix to the Sixty-second Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy 368

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.—Return ordered, "of the number of persons against whom proceedings were instituted" ... 368

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Access to Mountains Bill.—Reported from Standing Committee A.

Leave to the Committee to make a Special Report.

Special Report brought up, and read.

Report and Special Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 226.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 226] ... 423

NEW BILLS.

Salmon, Trout, and River Tweed Fisheries Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 314] ... 424

Naval Marriages Bill.—To be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 315] ... 424

SUPPLY [16TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,936,200, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expenses for the *personnel* for shipbuilding, repairs, maintenance, etc., including the cost of establishments of dockyards and naval yards at home and abroad which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905."

Mr. Arthur Lee (*Hampshire, Fareham*) ... 424
The First Lord of the Admiralty (*Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.*) ... 435
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lanarkshire, N.W.*) ... 442
Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) ... 446
Mr. McKenna ... 449
Mr. Arnold-Forster (*Croydon*) ... 452
Sir George Scott-Robertson (*Bradford, Central*) ... 458
Mr. James Hope (*Sheffield, Central*) ... 462
Mr. Walters (*Sheffield, Brightside*) ... 463
Mr. Wyndham (*Dover*) ... 466

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty (*Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.*) ... 471
Mr. Samuel Roberts (*Sheffield, Ecclesall*) ... 482
Mr. Summerbell (*Sunderland*) ... 485

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,936,100, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Summerbell.*)

Mr. Stuart Wortley (*Sheffield, Hallam*) ... 487
Mr. E. H. Lamb (*Rochester*) ... 488
Mr. Rees (*Montgomery Boroughs*) ... 490
Mr. Jenkins (*Chatham*) ... 493
Mr. W. T. Wilson (*Lancashire, Westhoughton*) ... 495
Mr. Maddison (*Burnley*) ... 497
Mr. Hunt (*Shropshire, Ludlow*) ... 500
Sir John Benn (*Devonport*) ... 502
Mr. Bellairs (*Lynn Regis*) ... 504
Mr. McKenna ... 513
Mr. Bramsdon (*Portsmouth*) ... 518
Mr. Summerbell ... 518
Mr. Gretton (*Rutland*) ... 519

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. £4,157,000, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, etc.—*Materiel.*
3. £7,220,700, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, etc.—Contract Work.

Mr. Gretton ... 521
Mr. McKenna ... 521

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,286,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Victualling and Clothing for the Navy, including the cost of Victualling Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Mr. Arthur Lee ... 522

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £258,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Medical Services, including the cost of Medical Establishments of Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Mr. Jenkins ... 522
Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) ... 524
Mr. McKenna ... 524
Mr. Claude Hay ... 524

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 167; Noes, 5. (Division List No. 186.)

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £13,900, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expense of Martial Law, including the cost of Naval Prisons at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Page

Mr. Jenkins 527
Mr. Bellairs 527

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported upon Thursday; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.*) 528

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Birrell*)—put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Birrell*)

Isle of Man (Customs Duties) Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendments.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. Claude Hay 529
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.*) ... 529

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Bee Pest (Ireland) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 16, after the word 'Department,' to insert the words 'charged with agricultural duties and authorised in writing in that behalf by the Department.'"—(*Mr. Joyce.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 35, to leave out subsection 4."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Carlile (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) 530
Mr. Claude Hay 530

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Whale Fisheries (Ireland) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2;

Amendment proposed.

"In page 2, line 21, to insert after the words 'Great Britain' the words 'or Ireland.'"—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Question proposed, "That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Carlile 531
Sir Samuel Scott (Marylebone, W.) 532

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.

Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.) 533

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of subsection 5, to insert the words 'and no holder of a licence or person employed by him shall, during the prohibited period land any whale killed in contravention of this section.'"—(*Mr. Hugh Law.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 533

Question put, and agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5 agreed to.

Clause 6.

Lord Balcarres 534
Mr. T. W. Russell 534
Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) 534

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES].—Resolution reported, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of the cost of establishing Borstal Institutions in pursuance of any Act of the present session, to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto, and to authorise the payment to societies of any expenses incurred by them under such Act in assisting or supervising persons discharged from a Borstal Institution."

Mr. Claude Hay 535
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 535

Resolution agreed to.

Post Office Savings Bank Bill.—As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed 536

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Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [LORDS].—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time and passed 536

Wild Birds Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed 536

Army Council Bill.—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn 536

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at a quarter before Twelve o'Clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1908.

NEW PEER.—The Right Hon. Sir Antony MacDonnell, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., having been created Baron Macdonnell of Swinford in the county of Mayo—Was (in the usual manner), introduced 537

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 537

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Holderness Water.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 537

Margate Corporation Bill.—Reported with Amendments 537

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments... ... 537

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

The Orders made on 25th June last and the 6th instant discharged, and Bill committed for Thursday next 537

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Reported with Amendments ... 537

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc,) Bill [H.L.].—Reported with Amendments, and re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next 537

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners 538

Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [H.L.]; Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to ... 538

Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to ... 538

Doncaster Corporation Bill; Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill; Swinton and Mexbrough Gas Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 538

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Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill; London United Tramways Bill; Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit To-morrow till Two o'clock 538

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. [No. 147] ... 538

PETITION.

Old-Age Pensions Bill.—Petition in favour of; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 538

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

India (Railways).—Administration Report on the railways in India ... 538

Explosions (**Explosion of Gelignite at Roslin, Edinburgh**).—Report on the circumstances attending an explosion of gelignite which occurred at the factory of Messrs. Curtis and Harvey, Limited, at Roslin 538

Education (**Scotland**).—Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, providing for special grants in aid of certain school boards in Scotland 539

Fisheries (**Scotland**).—Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 539

Army.—List of exceptions to the Army Regulations as to pay, non-effective pay, and allowances sanctioned during the year 1907–1908.
Presented (by Command) and ordered to lie on the Table 539

Public Offices Sites (**Extension**) **Bill**.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Duke of Devonshire be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Viscount Hutchinson (E. Donoughmore); and that the Duke of Devonshire be Chairman of Committee; read and agreed to. 539

Isle of Man (**Customs Duties**) **Bill** [**No 144**]; Post Office Savings Bank Bill [No. 145]; Wild Birds Bill [No, 146]—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª, and to be printed 539

Crofter's Holdings (**Scotland**) **Acts Amendment Bill** [H.L.] **Now Crofting Parishes** (**Scotland**) **Bill** [H.L.].—Reported from the Standing Committee with further Amendments; the Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received To-morrow, and Bill to be printed as amended. [No. 148] 539

Public Health (**Markets in Rural Districts**) **Bill**—Reported from the Standing Committee without Amendment; and to be read 3ª To-morrow 539

NEW BILL.

Cran Measures Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Earl Carrington; read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 149[... 540

Companies Consolidation Bill [H.L.]; Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.]; Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.].—The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to Members of the Committee and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit until further order. [No. 150] 540

Municipal Franchise (Mercantile Corporation and Companies) Bill [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Avebury 540

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

Lord Allendale 544
Lord Courtney of Penwith 546
Lord Avebury 547
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 548
Viscount St. Aldwyn 548

On Question that the Bill be read 2ª, their Lordships divided:—Contents, 42; Not Contents, 31.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L].—Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Ashbourne 549
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 551

On Question, agreed to.

House in Committee, according to order.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Amendments made by the Joint Committee agreed to.

Clause 1,

Lord Ashbourne 553
The Earl of Crewe 553

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:—

The Earl of Crewe 553

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out the words 'for use exclusively in connection with agriculture or horticulture,' and insert the words 'to be used exclusively in agriculture or horticulture for the distruction of insects, fungi, or bacteria, or as sheep dips or weed killers.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Viscount Hill 554
Lord Saltoun 554
Lord Stanley of Alderley 554

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Monk Bretton 555

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 17, to leave out the words 'a local authority,' and to insert the words 'any local authority authorised to appoint an analyst for the purposes of the Sale of Foods and Drugs Act.'"—(*Lord Monk-Bretton.*)

The Earl of Crewe 556
Lord Stanley of Alderley 557
Lord Saltoun 558

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Viscount Hill 558

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 22, after the word 'poisons,' to insert the words 'nor shall the provisions of this section be applicable in any municipal borough or in any urban district containing a duly registered chemist and druggist actually carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist.'"—(*Viscount Hill.*)

The Earl of Crewe 559
Lord Haversham 560

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Viscount Hill 560

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 25, after the word 'substance,' to insert the words 'not being an article included in the schedule to this Act.'"—(*Viscount Hill*).

The Earl of Crewe 561

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3:

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

The Earl of Crewe 561

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, lines 9 and 10, to leave out the words 'and may use the description of chemist and druggist, or of chemist, or of druggist,' and in line 16, after the word 'business' to insert the words 'A body corporate, and in Scotland a firm or partnership, may use the description of chemist and druggist, or of chemist or of druggist, or of dispensing chemist or druggist, if the foregoing requirements as to the carrying on of the business are observed, and if one at least of the board of directors or other governing body of the body corporate, or one at least of the members of the firm or partnership, as the case may be, is a duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist, but nothing in this provision shall authorise any body corporate, or in Scotland a firm or partnership, to use the discription of pharmacist.'" —(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Haversham 563
Lord Saltoun 564
Lord Ebury 564
Viscount Hill 565
The Earl of Crewe 566

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

The Earl of Crewe 566

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 35, after the word 'diplomas,' to insert the words 'or of qualified military dispensers.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Page

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5 :

Lord Clinton 567

Amendment moved—

"In page 4, line 1, to leave out the word 'poison,' and to insert the word 'substance.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

The Earl of Crewe 567

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendment agreed to.

Lord Clinton 567

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 4, to leave out the word 'word,' and to insert the word 'words,' and to leave out the word 'poison,' and to insert the words 'Dangerous; not to be taken.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

The Earl of Crewe 568

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6 :

The Earl of Crewe 568

Amendment moved—

"In page 4, line 19, to leave from the word 'nine' to the end of the clause.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Ashbourne 568
The Earl of Donoughmore 568

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.
Amendment moved—

"After Clause 6, to insert the following new Clause":—'(1) The provisions of this Act relative to the regulation of sale of certain poisonous substances for agricultural and horticultural purposes and to restrictions on sale of certain mineral acids shall apply to Ireland, with the following modifications: (*a*) For the reference to the Pharmacy Act, 1868, there shall be substituted a reference to the Pharmacy Act (Ireland), 1875, and the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875, Amendment Act, 1890, and the reference to regulations under Section one of the first-mentioned Act shall not apply; (*b*) for references to Orders in Council by His Majesty, or to Orders in Council, there shall be substituted references to Orders in Council by the Lord-Lieutenant; (*c*) the reference to a duly registered chemist and druggist shall include a reference to a registered druggist. (2) Save as provided by this section, the foregoing provisions of this Act shall not apply to Ireland.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Schedule :

The Earl of Crewe 569

Amendment moved—

"In pages 5 and 6, to leave out the Schedule, and to insert the following new Schedule :—' Part I.—Arsenic and its medicinal preparations; aconite, aconitine, and their preparations; alkaloids :—all poisonous vegetable alkaloids not specifically named in this Schedule and their salts, and all poisonous derivatives of vegetable alkaloids; atropine and its salts, and their preparations; belladonna, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·1 or more per cent. of belladonna alkaloids; cantharides, and its poisonous derivatives; coca, any preparation or admixture of, containing 1 or more per cent. of coca alkaloids; corrosive sublimate; cyanide of potassium, and all poisonous cyanides and their preparations; emetic tartar, and all preparations or admixtures containing 1 or more per cent. of emetic tartar; ergot of rye, and preparations of ergots; nux vomica, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·2 or more per cent. of strychnine; opium and all preparations or admixtures containing 1 or more per cent. morphine; picrotoxin; prussic acid, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·1 or more per cent. of prussic acid; savin and its oil, and all preparations or admixtures containing savin or its oil. Part II.—Almonds, essential oil of (unless deprived of prussic acid); antimonial wine; cantharides, tincture and all vesicating liquid preparations or admixtures of; carbolic acid, and liquid preparations of carbolic acid and its homologues containing more than 3 per cent. of those substances, except preparations for use as sheep wash or for any other purpose in connection with agriculture or horticulture contained in a closed vessel distinctly labelled with the word 'poisonous,' the name and address of the seller, and a notice of the special purposes for which the preparations are intended; chloral hydrate; chloroform, and all preparations or admixtures containing more than 20 per cent. of chloroform; coca, any preparation or admixture of, containing more than 0·1 per cent. but less than 1 per cent. of coca alkaloids; digitalis; mercuric iodide; mercuric sulphocyanide; oxalic acid; poppies, all preparations of, excepting red poppy petals and syrup of red poppies (papaver rhæas); precipitate, red, and all oxides of mercury; precipitate, white; strophanthus; sulphonal; all preparations or admixtures which are not included in Part I. of this Schedule, and contain a poison within the meaning of the Pharmacy Acts, except preparations or admixtures the exclusion of which from this Schedule is indicated by the words therein relating to carbolic acid, chloroform, and coca, and except such substances as come within the provisions of Section 5 of this Act.' "—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

The Earl of Crewe 570

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with Amendments to the House.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Ashbourne 570
The Earl of Crewe 571

On Question, Standing Committee negatived.

The Report of Amendments to be received on Tuesday next, and Bill to be printed as amended. [No. 151.]

Law of Distress Amendment Bill.—[SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Courtney of Penwith 571

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 573
Lord Ashbourne 574
Viscount St. Aldwyn 575
The Earl of Crewe 576
The Duke of Northumberland 577

On Question, Bill read 2a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3a To-morrow 577

Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Bill. [Second Reading].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Oranmore and Browne 578

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord Denman 579
Lord Ashbourne 579

On Question, Bill read 2a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Endowed Schools (Masters) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 579

Police (Superannuation) Bill.—Read 3a (according to order), and passed ... 579

The Flying of the Union Jack.

Earl Howe 579
The Earl of Crewe 579
The Earl of Meath 580

House adjourned at ten minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] Standing Orders not previously Inquired into complied with.—Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second 580

Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 581

Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords].—To be read the third time To-morrow ... 581

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 581

Notttinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—Ordered, That, in the case of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill, Standing Order 243 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read the third time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Bill accordingly read the third time, and passed 581

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Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time and committed 581

Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [LORDS] (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 581

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to :—Land Values (Scotland) Bill; Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to :—Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords], without Amendment 581

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 581

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 582

Merchandise Marks Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 582

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—6 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 582

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

East India (Army and Population).—Return to be printed. [No. 208] ... 582

Army (Pay, Non-effective Pay, and Allowances.)—List of Exceptions to the Army Regulations as to Pay, Non-effective Pay, and Allowances sanctioned during the year 1907–8; to lie upon the Table 582

East India (Railways).—Administrative Report on the Railways in India for the year 1907; to lie upon the Table 582

Explosions (Explosion of Gelignite at Roslin, Edinburgh).—Report on the circumstances attending an Explosion of Gelignite which occurred at the Factory of Messrs. Curtis and Harvey, Limited, at Roslin; to lie upon the Table 582

Education (Scotland).—Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, providing for Special Grants in aid of certain School Boards in Scotland; to lie upon the Table 582

Fishery Board (Scotland).—Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland; to lie upon the Table 583

Standing Committee on Scottish Bills.—Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Scottish Bills have leave to sit this day after Four o'clock.—(*Mr. Erskine*) 583

Local Taxation Licences, 1907–8.—Return ordered, "showing, in respect of each county in England and Wales, the number of the various Local Taxation Licences issued in the year ended the 31st day of March, 1908... 583

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Labourers' Cottages in County Clare 584

Salaries of Irish School Teachers 584

Dismissal of Mr. Algernon Sidgreaves, British Consul at Cadiz 585

Opium Prices 585

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The Suffragist Demonstration—Provision of Police Escort 586
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Distribution of the Caldbeck Estate 587
Irish Lords-Lieutenant of Counties 587
Purchase of Tenant's Holdings at Dunmore 589
Grading of Irish School Teachers 589
Salaries of Irish School Teachers 589
Army Service Corps Officers' Quarters at the Curragh Camp 590
Annual Leave of War Office Officials 591
Woolwich Common Area to be enclosed for Royal Army Medical Corps Building's 591
Organisation of Public Departments 591

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Australian Commonwealth Naval Scheme 592
Admiralty Contracts Extension of Time for Labour Disputes 593
H.M.S. "Defence"—Wages of Engine-fitters 594
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Wages at the Army Clothing Factory, Pimlico 597
Fife and Forfar Yeomanry Camp,—Degradation for Disobedience 597
Territorial Brigade Majors 598
Marriages in Military Chapels 599
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Marriages in Military Chapels in India 601
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Mr. Clark Kennedy and His Moorish Captors 602
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Cotton Cultivation in Egypt 603
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Police and Native Languages 607
The Imprisoned Suffragists 607
The Eight Hours Working Day 608
Reduction of Postmen's Pay 609
London and the Necessitous Children Act 609
East Hardwich School 610
Board of Agriculture—Scheme for Encouragement of Horse Breeding ... 610
Horse Poisoning at Willington, (Shropshire) 611

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 34 ; Noes, 251. (Division List No. 189.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 :

Mr. Kettle ... 699

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 1, after the word 'allowance,' to insert the words 'in the case of Great Britain.'"—(*Mr. Kettle.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Hobhouse ... 701
Mr. Hazleton ... 702
Mr. Kettle ... 702

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 55 ; Noes, 235. (Division List, No. 190.)

Mr. Harold Cox ... 705

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line after the word 'eight,' to insert the words 'until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and nine, when all duties upon sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin, upon the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland, shall cease.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Hobhouse ... 707
Mr. Stuart (Sunderland) ... 708
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) ... 709
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) ... 710
Sir Edwin Cornwall (Bethnal Green, N.E.) ... 710
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 710
Mr. C. E. Price (Edinburgh, Central) ... 711
Mr. A. Dewar (Edinburgh, S.) ... 712
Mr. Guinness (Bury St. Edmunds) ... 712

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'nine.'"—(*Mr. Guinness.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

Mr. Stuart ... 713
Sir F. Banbury ... 713

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Another Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"At the end, to add the words 'unless Parliament otherwise determine.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question, "That those words be there added to the proposed Amendment."

Mr. William Rutherford ... 714
Colonel Lockwood (Essex, Epping) ... 715

Question put, and agreed to.

Question proposed, "That the words as amended be there inserted."

Mr. Scott (Ashton-under-Lyne) 716
Mr. Hobhouse 716
Mr. Harold Cox 717
Mr. Harwood (Bolton) 718

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 111; Noes, 213. (Division List No. 191.)

Mr. McArthur (Liverpool, Kirkdale) 721

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 7, at end, to insert the words 'and the reduction shall be deemed to have taken effect as respects the duty which has been paid by any person on any sugar, molasses, glucose, or saccharin which was in his stock or possession at the close of the eighteenth of May, nineteen hundred and eight, provided that the excess duty paid thereon by such person amount in the aggregate to a sum not less than twenty-five pounds.'"—(*Mr. McArthur.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Lloyd-George 723
Mr. William Rutherford 726

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 53; Noes, 272. (Division List No. 192).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 729
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 733
Mr. Lloyd-George 734
Mr. Snowden 735

Clause agreed to.

Mr. William Redmond 738

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 26, to leave out the words '2s. 10d.,' and insert the words '2s. 8d.'"—(*Mr. William Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word '10' stand part of the clause."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. William Redmond 738

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 23, to leave out the words 'and the Irish Tobacco Act, 1907.'"—(*Mr. William Redmond*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Lloyd-George 739
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 740

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

Mr. Sears (Cheltenham) 740

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Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 25, to leave out from the word 'transfer' to end of line 37, and insert the words 'from the Commissioners of Customs to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue the management of any Customs duties which are under the management of the Commissioners of Customs at the time the order is made, and to transfer all the powers and duties of the Commissioners of Customs to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. (2) If an order is made under this section such order shall include the amalgamation of the Board of Customs with the Board of Inland Revenue and the disposal of the Customs House in Thames Street.'"—(*Mr. Sears.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Hobhouse 745
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 746
Mr. Harmood-Banner (*Liverpool, Everton*) 748

Amendment negatived.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 4 stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) 748
Mr. Hicks Beach 751
Mr. Hobhouse 752
Mr. Claude Hay 752
Mr. C. Duncan (*Barrow-in-Furness*) 753

Clause agreed to.

Clause 5:

Sir Clifford Cory (*Cornwall, St. Ives*) 753

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 16, to leave out the words 'shall be substituted for threepence,' and to insert the words 'in full shall be substituted for threepence in respect of every full sum of one hundred pounds and also any fractional part of one hundred pounds thereby insured.'"—(*Sir Clifford Cory.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Lloyd-George 755

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Bridgeman (*Shropshire, Oswestry*) 755

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 21, at end, to add the words 'and five shillings shall be substituted for ten shillings as the stamp duty chargeable under Section 9 of the Inland Revenue Act, 1906.'"—(*Mr Bridgeman.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Lloyd-George 757

Amendment negatived.

Question proposed, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Austen Chamberlain 757
Mr. Lloyd-George 758

Clause agreed to.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain 758

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this day.

Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland) Bill.—Considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment.

Bill read the third time, and passed 759

Whale Fisheries (Ireland) Bill.—Bill, as amended, considered.

Mr. Mooney (Newry) 759

Bill read a third time, and passed.

Telegraph Construction Bill.—As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. Claude Hay 759
The Postmaster-General (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) ... 760

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, WEDNESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Commons' Amendments considered, and agreed to 761

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 761

Widnes Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 761

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ... 761

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill; Holderness Water Bill.—Moved, That the Order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª; agreed to: Bills read 2ª accordingly 761

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.—Committed... 761

Holderness Water Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 761

Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments 761

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Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill.—Moved, That the Order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed, the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Bradford (Rural) Order 761

Holderness Water Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradford (Rural) Order).—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Central Ireland Electric Power Bill and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the Holderness Water Bill and the Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (so far as it relates to the Bradford (Rural) Order); read, and agreed to. All petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the Petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bills 761

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

India (North-West Frontier).—Papers regarding—

Orakzais.—Request of certain clans to be taken under British Administration.

Zakka Khel Afridis.—Operations.

Mohmands.—Operations 762

Judicial Statistics (Ireland) 1907.—Part I. Criminal Statistics 762

East Africa Protectorate.—Correspondence relating to affairs in the East Africa Protectorate.

Presented, and ordered to lie on the Table 762

Harwich Harbour.—Abstract of the accounts of the receipts and expenditure 762

Superannuation.—Treasury Minute, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of auditor in the Local Government Board for Ireland, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table 762

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877.

Statute made by the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, amending Statute 16, Clause 12, of the Statutes of the House.

Statute made by the Governing Body of Brasenose College, Oxford, amending Statute III., Part II., 12, of the Statutes of the College.

Statute made by the Governing Body of All Souls' College, Oxford, amending Statute 12A, Clause 2, of the Statutes of the College.

Statutes made by the University of Cambridge amending Chapter VI., Statute B., Sections 12 and 13, Chapter VII., Statute B., Sections 2 and 4, and adding Paragraphs 8 and 9 to Chapter VII., Statute B., of the Statutes of the University.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 152) 763

Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland) Bill (No 153); Whale Fisheries (Ireland) Bill (No. 154); Telegraph (Construction) Bill (No. 155).—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª, and to be printed 763

IRISH LAND PURCHASE.

The Earl of Donoughmore ... 763

Moved, "That there be laid before the House papers respecting the provision and distribution of the funds required for the carrying out of the purposes of the Irish Land Act, 1903."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

Lord Castletown ... 778
Lord Clonbrock ... 784
Lord Denman ... 787
The Earl of Dunraven ... 796
The Marquess of Londonderry ... 803
The Earl of Mayo ... 806
The Marquess of Lansdowne ... 812
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) ... 817
The Earl of Donoughmore ... 823

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Crofting Parishes (Scotland) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow ... 824

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order) and passed ... 824

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons ... 824

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Eight o'lcock till to-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 15TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Lords Amendments considered and agreed to 824

Air and Calder Navigation Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 824

Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [LORDS].—Reported with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed ... 824

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to: Police Superannuation Bill.

Amendments to Amendments to:—Leicester Corporation Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to:—Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords], without Amendment ... 825

PETITIONS.

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petitions in favour to lie upon the Table ... 825

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 6 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 825

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour to lie upon the Table 825

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Criminal and Judicial Statistics (Ireland).—Criminal and Judicial Statistics of Ireland for the year 1907. Part I. Criminal Statistics: to lie upon the Table 825

Labourers (Ireland)—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table 825

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877 (Oxford).—Statute made by the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, amending Statute XVI., Clause 12, of the Statutes of the House to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 228] 825

Harwich Harbour.—Abstract of the Accounts of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board; to lie upon the Table... 826

East India (North West-Frontier.)—Papers regarding (1) Orakzais. Request of certain Clans to be taken under British Administration (2) Zakka Khiel Afridis, Operations; (3) Mohmands, Operations: to lie upon the Table ... 826

East Africa Protectorate.—Correspondence relating to Affairs in the East Africa Protectorate: to lie upon the Table 826

Superannuation Act, 1859.—Treasury Minute, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Auditor in the Local Government Board for Ireland professional or other peculiar qualification not ordinarily to be required in the Public Service are required; to lie upon the Table 826

Civil Service (Supplementary Estimates, 1908-9).—Estimate presented, of the Further Sums required to be voted for the service of the year ending 31st March, 1909; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 229] 826

Taxes and Imposts.—Return ordered 826

County and Borough Councils (Women Electors).—Return ordered, "showing the number of women in England and Wales who are qualified to vote for County Councils and for Councillors in Municipal Boroughs ... 827

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Load Lines on British Ships 827
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Post Office Scales of Living 828
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Salmon and Moray Firth Trawlers 829
Fishery Cruiser at Longhope 830
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Manufacturing in Prisons ... 831
Borough of Hornsey Building Bye-Laws ... 832
Foreign Trawlers in British Waters ... 832
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Irish Universities Bill ... 833
Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants on the Grehan Estate, Kildorrery ... 833
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The Licensing Bill 874

Public Rights of Ways Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 230].

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 230].

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 321] 874

Municipal Elections Bill.—Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 231].

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 231].

Bill to be taken into consideration To-morrow 874

NEW BILLS.

Town Tenants Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 322] 875

Building Operations and Engineering Works Bill.—To be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 323] 875

Grand Jury (Ireland) Act.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 324]... ... 875

Finance Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 6.

Mr. Laurence Hardy (Kent, Ashford) ... 875

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 16, to leave out from the word 'pounds' to end of line 19."—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 877
Mr. Harmood-Banner (Liverpool, Everton) ... 877
Mr. Laurence Hardy ... 878
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) ... 878
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 879
Mr. Laurence Hardy ... 882
Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) ... 883

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Laurence Hardy ... 883

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, to leave out lines 25 and 27 inclusive."—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left stand part of the clause."

Mr. Harmood-Banner ... 884
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 885
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) ... 886

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question proposed, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) ... 886
Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) ... 887
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 889
Mr. Lane-Fox (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) ... 890
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) ... 891
Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) ... 892
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) ... 893
Viscount Helmsley ... 894
Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) ... 896
Mr. Harmood-Banner ... 897
Mr. Everett (Suffolk, Woodbridge) ... 898
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 899
Mr. Guinness (Bury St. Edmunds) ... 903
Mr. Munro Ferguson ... 905
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 906
Mr. Rogers (Wiltshire, Devizes) ... 907
Mr. Hicks Beach ... 908
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) ... 910

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Mr. Lloyd-George 911
Mr. A. J. Balfour 913
Mr. Courthope 914
Viscount Helmsley 914
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 914

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 299 ; Noes, 86. (Division List No. 193.)

Clause 7 :

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 919

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 35, to leave out the words 'one shilling,' and to insert the words 'eleven pence.'"—(*Mr. Samuel Roberts.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'one shilling' stand part of the clause."

Mr. Lloyd-George 922
Mr. Hicks Beach 923
Mr. Chiozza Money (Paddington, N.) 926
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 928
Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 931
Mr. Leverton Harris (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) 932

Question put.

The Committee divided : Ayes, 242 ; Noes, 38. (Division List No. 194.)

Mr. Fell 935

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 36, after the word 'tax' to insert the words 'except such as relate to the method of assessment of the profits of companies and corporations.'"—*Mr. Fell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 938
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.) ... 939
Mr. Watt (Glasgow College) 940

Amendment put, and negatived.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8 :

Mr. Fell 940
Mr. Lloyd-George 941

Clauses 9 and 10 agreed to.

Mr. Fell 941
Mr. Watt 941

New clause—

"Provided the incomes of husband and wife be taken to be the income of separate persons."—(*Mr. Watt.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Lloyd-George 942
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 942

Question put.

The Committe divided :—Ayes, 32 ; Noes, 227. (Division List, No. 195.)

Mr. Chiozza-Money 945

New Clause—

"Every person upon whom notice is served in manner prescribed by Sectien 48 of the Income-tax Act, 1842 (which section relates to the delivery of notices by assessors), requiring him to make a return of his income chargeable to duty under any and every schedule of the income-tax, shall make a return, in the form required by the notice, which shall show the amount of his aggregate income from all sources, whether he is or is not chargeable with duty, and upon what part or parts of such aggregate income, if any, income-tax has already been paid under the Income-tax Acts by deduction at the source, and in default shall be liable to a penalty under Section 55 of the Income-tax Act, 1842. Provided that a penalty inflicted in the case of a person proceeded against for not complying with this provision, who proves that he was not chargeable to income-tax, shall not exceed five pounds for any one offence."—(*Mr. Chiozza-Money.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Lloyd-George 948
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 949
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 949
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) 950
Mr. Chiozza-Money 950
Mr. Stuart (Sunderland) 951

Proposed clause negatived.

Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 951

New clause—

"On and after the thirty-first day of March, nineteen hundred and nine, the duty of Customs of one penny in the pound on raw cocoa shall cease to be payable, and so much of the Customs Tariff Act, 1876, as refers to this duty is hereby repealed."—(*Mr. Hunt.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Lloyd-George 953

Proposed clause negatived.

Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) 953

New clause—

"It shall be lawful for any person owning and occupying woodlands to elect to be assessed to the duties of income-tax chargeable under Schedule D., and in accordance with the rules of that schedule, in lieu of assessment to the duties under Schedules A. and B."—(*Lord Willoughby de Eresby.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time." ... 957
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 958
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 958
Mr. Courtenay Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) ... 958

Proposed clause, by leave withdrawn.
Lord R. Cecil ... 958

New clause—
"Income arising from dividends on shares in a private company held on the condition, express or implied, that the holder shall give his services in the management and conduct of the business shall be deemed to be earned income within the meaning of Section 19 of the Finance Act of 1907.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time." ... 960
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 961
Lord R. Cecil ... 961
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 961
Sir F. Banbury ... 962
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 964
Mr. J. M. Henderson (Aberdeenshire, W.) ... 965
Mr. Dunn (Cornwall, Camborne) ... 966
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) ...

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 57; Noes, 266. (Division List No. 196.)
Mr. Hicks Beach ... 969

New clause—
"In addition to the deduction of one-eighth and one-sixth allowed under Section 5 of the Finance Act of 1894 there shall also, for the purposes of collection, be allowed the cost of insurance and a deduction for expenses of management not exceeding 5 per cent. of the gross annual value."—(*Mr. Hicks Beach.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."
Mr. Hobhouse ... 970
Lord Willoughby de Eresby ... 971
Mr. Hicks Beach ... 971

Proposed Clause negatived.
Mr. Bridgeman (Shropshire, Oswestry) ... 972

New clause—
"The excess duty of fifteen shillings for every hackney carriage as defined in Section 4 of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888, shall be and is hereby repealed."—(*Mr. Bridgeman.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 972
Mr. Bridgeman ... 972

Proposed clause negatived.

Mr. Laurence Hardy 973

New clause—

> "Section 12 of the Finance Act, 1898, shall apply in cases where the owner is a body of persons, corporate or incorporate, who is exempt from income-tax under the Acts dealing with exemption for charitable purposes."—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Lloyd-George 974
Mr. Everett... 974

Proposed clause negatived.

Mr. Rawlinson (*Cambridge University*) 974

New clause—

> "Any railway company shall be entitled to deduct from the total amount payable by such company under this section the aggregate sum paid by the same company during the above-mentioned year for duty at the rate of five pounds per one hundred pounds under Section 2 of 5 and 6 Vict., c. 79, and to the schedule thereto, and for duty at the rate of two pounds per one hundred pounds under Section 2, subsection 2 of 46 and 47 Vict., c. 34, upon moneys received or charged for the hire, fare, or conveyance of passengers upon or along any such railway."—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Lloyd-George 975

Proposed clause negatived.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Bee Pest (Ireland) Bill.—Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Sir F. Banbury 976

Bill re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House in respect of Clause 5.—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 5:

Sir F. Banbury 976

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 2, line 26, to leave out the word 'may,' and to insert the word 'shall.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'may' stand part of the clause,"

The Vice President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (*Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.*) 977
Mr. Charles Craig (*Antrim, S.*) 978
Mr. Carlile (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) 979

July 15.]

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 169 ; Noes, 34. (Division List No. 197.)

Clause agreed to, and Bill reported without Amendment ; As amended, in Committee, considered ; read the third time, and passed.

Costs in Criminal Cases Bill.—As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 2, line 12, at end, to add the words '(4) No expenses to witnesses, whether for the prosecution or defence, shall be allowed at a Court of Assize or Quarter Sessions before which any indictable offence is prosecuted or tried, if such witnesses are witnesses to character only, unless the Court shall otherwise order.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

"In page 2, line 26, after the word 'due,' to insert the words 'for travelling or personal expenses.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

"In page 3, line 42, at end, to add the words 'For the purpose of meeting any change in the financial relations between any counties and boroughs which may arise by virtue of the provisions of this Act as to the payment of any costs allowed under this Act, any necessary equitable adjustment may be made by agreement between the councils of the counties or boroughs concerned, or, in default of agreement, by the Local Government Board. The Board may at their option determine the matter as arbitrators, or otherwise, and, if they elect to determine the matter as arbitrators, the provisions of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1868, respecting arbitrations by the Board of Trade, and the enactments amending those provisions, shall apply as if they were herein re-enacted and in terms made applicable to the Local Government Board and the determination of matters under this subsection. For the purpose of this subsection the Local Government Board may hold any local inquiry, and subsections 1 and 5 of Section 87 of the Local Government Act, 1888, shall apply accordingly.' "—(*The Attorney-General.*)

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 42, at end, to add the words 'and to remain in attendance for that purpose during the sitting of the Court, or until such hour as the Court shall direct.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

Mr. Carlile... 982
The Attorney-General (*Sir W. Robson, South Shields*) 982

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. Carlile... 983
Sir W. Robson 983

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill.—Order for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Nannetti (*Dublin, College Green*) 983
Mr. Charles Craig 984
Mr. Summerbell 985

Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 986
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr Birrell, Bristol, N.*) 988
Mr. J. MacVeagh (*Down, S.*) 991
Mr. Birrell... 992
Mr. Forster (*Kent, Sevenoaks*) 992

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Birrell.*)

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty-eight minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 16TH JULY, 1908.

FAIRFAX PEERAGE)—Petition of Albert Kirby Fairfax (claiming to be) Lord Fairfax of Cameron for leave to lodge his printed case; read and ordered as prayed 993

SAT FIRST.—The Lord Saint Levan sat first in Parliament after the death of his father 993

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Sligo and Arigna Railway; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2)

The same were ordered to lie upon the Table 993

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respects of the Ards Railways Bill ought to be dispensed with and the Bill allowed to proceed provided Clauses 79 and 81 be struck out unless proof be given before the Examiners that the Bill has been approved by the proprietors of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company present at a meeting called and held in accordance with Standing Order 64.

Read and agreed to 993

South West Suburban Water Bill.—Reported, with Amendments ... 993

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Reported with Amendments ... 993

Ards Railways Bill.—Moved, That the order made on the 25th day of March be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed for Tuesday next 993

Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill—Read 3ª, with Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 994

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Moved, "That the Standing Order No. 143 be considered and dispensed with in respect of the said Bill, and that the Bill be now read 3ª; agreed to; Bill read 3ª accordingly, and passed, and sent to the Commons 994

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 994

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Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill; London United Tramways Bill, Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill—(Bradford Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Willoughby de Broke and the Lord Colchester be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Elphinstone and the Lord Hindlip; read, and agreed to ... 994

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 994

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill. [H.L.].—Read 3 (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 994

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): The Amendments proposed by the Committee made: Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received on Monday next. 994

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906.—Order in Council 994

Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890.—Order in Council, entitled "The Cyprus Courts of Justice Order, 1908." 995

Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890, and Consular Salaries and Fees Act, 1891.—Order in Council, entitled "The China (Passenger Ship Fees) Order in Council, 1908." 995

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Order in Council, approving a Memorial of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table 995

Osborne.—Report of the House Governor and Medical Superindent for the year 995

Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commissioners, Vol. III. Report.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 995

Shop Hours Act, 1904 (County Borough of Blackpool).—Order made by the council of the county borough of Blackpool 995

Police Act, 1890.—Correspondence relative to the refusal of the Secretary of State's certificate under Section 17 (2) of the Act, to the Tyne River Police Force 995

Winter Assizes Acts, 1876 and 1877.—Seven Orders in Council, relating to the ensuing Winter Assizes 995

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898.—Order in Council, adding to the exemptions from light dues in the Second Schedule to the Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898 996

Bee Pest (Ireland) Bill [No. 156]; Costs in Criminal Cases Bill [No. 157.]—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª, and to be printed 996

Tobacco Growing (Scotland) Bill [SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Camperdown 996

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

Lord Denman 996

On Question, Bill read 2ᵃ, and Committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): The Amendments proposed by the Select Committee made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendments to be received on Monday next 996

Coroners (Ireland) Bill [SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Donoughmore 997

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

Lord Denman 997
Lord Ashbourne 997

On Question, Bill read 2ᵃ, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

Post Office Savings Bank Bill [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Granard 997

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ."—(*The Earl of Granard.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ᵃ, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

Crofting Parishes (Scotland) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ᵃ (according to order). Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons ... 998

SALE OF LANDS IN FIJI.

Lord Stanhope 998

"Moved, That an humble address be presented to His Majesty for further correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Fiji relating to the sale of certain lands in the Island of Viti Levu, in continuation of Papers laid before the House last year."—(*Lord Stanmore.*)

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1000
Lord Stanmore 1002

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly

PROPOSED SANATORIUM AT STREAMHILL.

Lord Castletown 1002
Lord Denman 1003
Lord Castletown 1006

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

The Duke of Bedford 1008
Lord Raglan 1026
Lord Harris 1031
Lord Willoughby de Broke 1033
Lord Heneage 1044

The Under-Secretary of State for War (Lord Lucas) 1035
Viscount Midleton 1046
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Earl Carrington) 1046
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1047

EDUCATION CODE—MEDICAL INSPECTION OF CHILDREN.

Lord Clifford of Chudleigh... 1048

Moved to resolve "That, in the opinion of this House, the words 'Satisfactory provision must be made for the medical inspection of children attending the school in accordance with Section 13 (1) (*b*) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907,' in Article 25, subsection (*c*) of the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary schools in England should be omitted from the Code."—(*Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.*)

Lord Stanley of Alderley 1050
The Lord Steward (Earl Beauchamp) 1052
Lord Clifford of Chudleigh... 1055

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock

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HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 16TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Lords' Amendments considered, and agreed to ... 1055

Barry Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 1055

Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [Lords]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1055

Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1055

Taff Vale Railway Bill [LORDS] (BY ORDER).—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1055

Lanark Corporation (Extension of Boundaries, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill.—Presented by Mr. Sinclair; and ordered (under Section 7 of the Act) to be considered upon Monday next 1056

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [LORDS].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1056

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [LORDS].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1056

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table 1056

Tollemache Estate Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment; To lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time 1056

Leith Burgh Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1056

Employment of Military in Cases of Disturbance.—Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 236] 1056

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to:—Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill, without Amendment; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to:—Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Post Office Sites Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Endowed Schools (Masters) Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords] ... 1056

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Ordered (under Section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1889) to be considered upon Monday next 1057

River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1057

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1057

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1058

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—4 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1058

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made by the Board of Trade; to lie upon the Table 1058

Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commission, Vol. VIII. Report [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1058

Police Act, 1890.—Correspondence relative to the refusal of the Secretary of State's Certificate under Section 17 (2) of the Act to the River Tyne Police Force; to lie upon the Table 1058

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Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Blackpool; to lie upon the Table 1058

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877 (Oxford).—Statute made by the Governing Body of Brasenose College, Oxford; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 233].

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of All Souls College, Oxford; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 234] ... 1058

Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act, 1877 (Cambridge).—Statutes made by the University of Cambridge; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 235] 1059

Winter Assizes Acts, 1876 and 1877.—Seven Orders in Council, relating to the ensuing Winter Assizes; to lie upon the Table... 1059

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898.—Order in Council; to lie upon the Table ... 1059

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906.—Order in Council; to lie upon the Table 1059

Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890.—Order in Council; to lie upon the Table... 1059

Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890, and Consular Salaries and Fees Act, 1891—Order in Council; to lie upon the Table 1059

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Order in Council; to lie upon the Table 1060

Osborne.—Report by the House Governor and Medical Superintendent at Osborne for the year ending 31st March, 1908; to lie upon the Table ... 1060

Labourers (Ireland).—Return to be printed. [No. 232] 1060

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

European Parcels Post 1060
Pekin Indemnity 1061
Volunteer Plain Clothes Drills 1061
Fyfield Farm, Enford, Wiltshire 1062
Woolwich Common 1062
Armoy Water Supply 1063
Drumkirk Evicted Tenant 1064
Estates Commissioners' Reports on Evicted Holdings 1064
Rathlin Poor Law Valuation 1064
De Vesci Estate, Abbeyleix 1065
Bombay Political Department 1066
Motor Traffic on Main Roads 1066
Lewis Fishing Industry 1066
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Suggested Civil Service Conciliation Board 1069
Bexhill Post Office 10

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Kildorrery Assault Prosecution 1070
Communication with Rathlin Island 1071
London Stock Exchange Bye-Laws 1071
Royal Engineer Volunteer Quartermaster 1072
Territorial Force Regulations 1073
British Garrison in South Africa 1073

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

The Coastguard 1073
The Admiralty and the Press 1074
The Mediterranean Fleet 1075
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Special Trains for Territorial Camps 1076
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Military Churches in India 1079
Punjab Irrigation Works 1081
Uganda Import Duties 1082
Uganda Officials' Insurance against Loss 1082
Natal Indemnity Bill 1083
Tilonko 1083
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Scottish Expenditure 1086
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Kew Garden Painters 1095
Elementary School Teachers 1095
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Clergy Pensions 1097
Clyde Pilot's Grievance 1098

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Limerick Labourer's Cottage Scheme 1099

Riverstown Band and Police 1099

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Work of the Irish Congested Districts Boards 1101

Ulster Catholics and University Education 1103

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Clanricarde Estate Evicted Tenant... 1104

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Irish Loan Stock 1107

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Ireland and the Income Tax 1109

Transfer of Coastguards to Customs 1109

Foreign Office Votes 1110

Business of the House 1110

Post Offices Sites Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 325]

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Post Office Sites Bill [Lords] with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bill.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*)... 1111

NEW BILL.

Nationalisation of Canals and Railways Bill—To be read a second time upon Monday, 27th July, and to be printed... 1112

Supply [17th Allotted Day.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Revenue Department.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £11,821,531 be granted to His Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Post Office, including Telegraphs and Telephones.

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1112

Dr. Rutherford (*Middlesex, Brentford*) 1123

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Chief Offices) be reduced by £100."—(*Dr. Rutherford.*)

Mr. Walsh (*Lancashire, Ince*) 1125

Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) 1135

Mr. Harwood (*Bolton*) 1141

Mr. Arnold-Forster (*Croydon*) 1144

Mr. Tomkinson (*Cheshire, Crewe*) 1145

Viscount Valentia (*Oxford*) 1146

Sir Alfred Thomas (*Glamorganshire, E.*) 1147

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Sir F. Dixon-Hartland (Middlesex, Uxbridge) 1145
Mr. F. Meehan (Leitrim, N.) 1146
Sir H. Norman (Wolverhampton, S.) 1157
Mr. Staveley-Hill (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) 1158
Sir Joseph Leese (Lancashire, Accrington) 1159
Mr. George Roberts (Norwich) 1159
Mr. Hills (Durham) 1162
Mr. Wiles (Islington, S.) 1164
Mr. William Rutherford (Liverpool, West Derby) 1168
Mr. Crossfield (Warrington) 1170
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) 1171
Mr. Luke White (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose) 1174
Mr. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green) 1175
Captain Morrison-Bell (Devonshire, Ashburton) 1184
Mr. Stuart (Sunderland) 1185
Sir George Scott-Robinson (Bradford, Central) 1188
Mr. Steadman (Finsbury, Central) 1189
Mr. McCullum (Paisley) 1194
Mr. C. E. Shaw (Stafford)... 1195
Mr. Annan Bryce (Inverness Burghs) 1200
Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington) 1201
Mr. John Ward (Stoke on-Trent) 1201
Sir A. Spicer (Hackney, Central) 1205
Mr. Sydney Buxton 1205
Mr. Seddon (Lancashire, Newton) 1212
Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 1213
Dr. Rutherford 1213
Mr. Clynes (Manchester, N.E.) 1213
Mr. Wardle (Stockport) 1214

And, it being Eleven of the clock, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again on Monday next.

Registration Bill [LORDS.]—Order for Second Reading read.

The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1215

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir W. Robson.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Friendly Societies Bill.—As amended, considered.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.) ... 1216

Amendment proposed—

"In Clause 9, line 14, after the word 'improperly,' to insert the words 'and costs.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Forster (Kent, Sevenoaks) 1216
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) 1216
Mr. Hobhouse 1216

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Hobhouse 1216
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 1217
Sir W. Robson 1217
Mr. Claude Hay 1218
Mr. Hobhouse 1218
Mr. Forster 1218
Mr. Claude Hay 1219

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Companies Bill [Lords.]—Order for Second Reading read.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Sir H. Kearley, Devonport) 1219

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) 1220
Mr. Claude Hay 1220

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Sir H. Kearley.*)

Whereupon Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty-nine minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 17TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders not previously Inquired into complied with).—Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords]; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1221

Provisional Order Bills (no Standing Orders Applicable).—Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next ... 1221

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time and passed with Amendments 1221

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 1221

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London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Third Reading deferred till Tuesday next, at a quarter-past Eight of the Clock 1221

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 1222

Ammanford Urban Distict Council Water Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1222

Private Bill (Group K.).—Sir George White reported from the Committee on Group K. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 1222

Liverpool Corporation (Streets and Buildings) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1222

PETITIONS.

Housing, Town Planning, etc, Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1222

Licensing Bill.—6 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1222

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1222

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Irish Railways (Vice-Regal Commission).—Fourth Report of the Vice-Regal Commissioners; to lie upon the Table 1222

Irish Railways (Vice-Regal Commission).—Appendix to the Fourth Report of the Vice-Regal Commissioners; to lie upon the Table 1222

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 237] ... 1223

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Departmental Committee).—Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into and report upon the subject of Agricultural Education in England and Wales, with a Copy of the Minutes appointing the Committee and Appendices; to lie upon the Table 1223

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (Departmental Committee).—Minutes of Evidence taken before the Departmental Committee appointed to enquire into and report upon the subject of Agricultural Education in England and Wales, and Index; to lie upon the Table 1223

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Newport; to lie upon the Table 1223

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4052 and 4059 to 4065; to lie upon the Table 1223

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Birching of Juvenile Offenders 1223
International Opium Commission—Terms of reference 1224
New Hebrides Convention—Delay in Appointing a British Land Court Judge 1224
Midland and Great Western Railway Company and Mullingar Canal Towing Path 1225
Local Expenditure 1226
Preservatives in Butter 1227
Small Holding Schemes 1227
Rural Population and Old Age Pensions 1227
Farms Held by the Ballestry Family 1228
Proclaimed Counties in Ireland 1228
Irish Local Expenditure 1229
The Union Jack and the Territorial Force 1229

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table 1231

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.—LICENSING BILL—ALLOCATION OF TIME.

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1231

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee stage, Report stage, and Third Reading of the Licensing Bill, and the necessary stages of the Financial Resolution relating thereto, shall be proceeded with as follows: (1) Committee Stage.—Nineteen allotted days shall be given to the Committee stage of the Bill, and the proceedings in Committee on each allotted day shall be those shown in the second column of the table annexed to this Order, and those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the time shown in the third column of that table. (2) Report Stage.—Five allotted days shall be given to the Report stage of the Bill, and the proceedings for each of those allotted days shall be such as may be hereafter determined in manner provided by this Order, and those proceedings, if not previously brought to a conclusion, shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on each such allotted day. (3) Third Reading.—One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings thereon shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day. On the conclusion of the Committee stage the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put, and the House shall then proceed to consider the proposals made by the Government for the allocation of the proceedings on the Report stage of the Bill between the allotted days given to that stage. The proceedings on the consideration of those proposals may be entered on at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House, but if they are not brought to a conclusion before the expiration of two hours after they have been commenced Mr. Speaker shall, at the expiration of that time, bring them to a conclusion by putting the Question on the Motion proposed by the Government, after having put the Question, if necessary, on any Amendment or other Motion which has been already proposed from the Chair and not disposed of. After this Order comes into operation, any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution relating thereto is put down as the first Order of the Day, followed by the Bill. Provided that 5 p.m. shall be substituted for 10.30 p.m. as the time at which proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under the foregoing provisions on any allotted day which is a Friday, but Friday shall not be considered an allotted day for the purpose of the sixth or seventh allotted days. For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments, new clauses, or schedules moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, clauses, or schedules, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. A Motion may be made by the Government to leave out any clause or consecutive clauses of the Bill before the consideration of any Amendments to the clause or clauses in Committee. The Question on a Motion made by the Government to leave out any clause or clauses of the Bill shall be put forthwith by the Chairman or Speaker without debate. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order 'Time for taking Private Business,' be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day, no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by the Government, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) Prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) Prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of."

Table.
Committee Stage.

Allotted Day.	Proceedings.	Time for Proceedings to be brought to a Conclusion.
First	Clause 1	—
Second	Clause 1	10.30
Third	Clause 2	10.30
Fourth	Clause 3 to the beginning of subsection (2).	—
Fifth	Clause 3 to the beginning of subsection (2).	10.30
Sixth	Clause 3, subsection 2	7.30
	Clauses 4 and 5	—
Seventh	Clauses 4 and 5	7.30
	Clauses 6, 7, and 8	10.30
Eighth	Clause 9	10.30
Ninth	Clauses 10 and 11	—
Tenth	Clauses 10 and 11	10.30
Eleventh	Clauses 12, 13, and Committee stage of Financial Resolution.	10.30
Twelfth	Report stage of Financial Resolution and Clauses 14 to 17.	10.30
Thirteenth	Clauses 18 and 19	10.30
Fourteenth	Clause 20	10.30
Fifteenth	Clauses 21 to 35	10.30
Sixteenth	Clause 36	10.30
Seventeenth	Clauses 37 to 40	10.30
Eighteenth	Clauses 41 to 47, and new Clauses	10.30
Nineteenth	Schedules, and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee stage to a conclusion.	10.30

—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 1241
Lord R. Cecil (*Marylebone, E.*) 1248
Mr. Bottomley (*Hackney, S.*) 1257

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out all after the words 'That,' and to add the words 'this House declines to continue the practice of passing Procedure Resolutions to deal with the later stages of particular Bills, and calls upon the Government to lay before it proposals for settling the procedure of this House on a permanent basis.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the end of line 4, stand part of the Question."

Mr. Asquith 1260
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 1264
Mr. Byles (*Salford, N.*) 1269
Mr. Laurence Hardy (*Kent, Ashford*) 1272
Mr. C. B. Harmsworth (*Worcestershire, Droitwich*) 1276
Mr. James Hope (*Sheffield, Central*) 1279
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland*) 1282
Mr. Chaplin (*Surrey, Wimbledon*) 1285
Mr. J. MacVeagh (*Down, S.*) 1289
Mr. Clynes (*Manchester, N.E.*) 1295
Mr. Everett (*Suffolk, Woodbridge*) 1297
Mr. Keir Hardie (*Merthyr Tydvil*)... 1299
Mr. Asquith 1300

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 226; Noes, 101. (Division List No. 198.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the end of line 4, stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 221; Noes, 101. (Division List No. 199.)

Mr. Laurence Hardy 1307
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 1307

Amendment proposed—

"In line 15, to leave out '10.30,' and insert '11.0.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That '10.30' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Asquith 1307

Question put, and agreed to.

Sir F. Banbury 1308
Mr. Pike Pease (*Darlington*) 1309

Amendment proposed—

"In line 18, to leave out the word "One," and to insert the word "Two."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word "one" stand part of the Question.

Mr. Asquith 1309

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Laurence Hardy 1310
Lord R. Cecil 1310

Amendment proposed—

"In line 22, to leave out the words 'then proceed to,' and insert the words 'on a subsequent day.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question, "That the words 'then proceed to' stand part of the Question," put, and negatived.

Mr. Asquith 1311

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Proposed words there inserted.

Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1311

Amendment proposed—

"In line 49, to leave out the words 'moved by the Government.'"—(*Mr. Fell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Asquith ... ...

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Laurence Hardy 1312

Amendment proposed—

"In line 54, to leave out from the second 'be,' to end of line 58.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Resolution," put, and negatived.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh" and "Shame."]

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 209; Noes, 88. (Division List No. 200.)

Main Question, as amended, put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes, 209; Noes, 89. (Division List No. 201.)

Resolution agreed to accordingly.

Registration Bill [LORDS].

Considered in Committee.

In the Committee.

[Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Sir E. Carson (Dublin University) 1323
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 1324
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1325
Sir William Bull (Hammersmith) 1326
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1326
Sir F. Banbury 1327

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman report progress and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Companies Bill [LORDS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) 1327
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 1328

Motion made, and Question "That Mr. SPEAKER do report progress and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report progress; to sit again upon Tuesday next.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, 20TH JULY, 1908.

The Right Honourable George Whiteley, having been created Baron Marchamley of Hawkestone in the County of Salop, (was in the usual manner), introduced.

The Earl Ferrers took the oath 1329

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Tyne Improvement Bill.—The King's Consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1329

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1329

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—Moved, That the Order made on the 25th of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bills read 2ª, accordingly... 1329

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1329

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons 1329

Dover Graving Docks Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 1329

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 1329

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments: The said Amendments considered, and agreed to 1329

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments 1330

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 1330

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Committed for To-morrow 1330

Public Offices Sites (Extension Bill); London United Tramways Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradfield Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill.—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at half-past One o'clock; read, and ordered to lie upon the Table 1330

London United Tramways Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradfield Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Powis and the Lord Langford be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Lord Dunboyne and the Lord Hindlip; read, and agreed to 1330

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, &c.) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read To-morrow 1330

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed 1330

Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons ... 1330

PETITIONS.

Old-Age Pensions Bill.

Lord Avebury 1330

Petition presented and ordered to lie upon the Table

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Ireland (Constabulary in Proclaimed Counties).—Return showing in the case of each proclaimed county in Ireland: The number of officers and men of the Royal Irish Constabulary actually in each county, etc.

Ordered to be laid before the House.—(*The Lord Killanin*) 1331

Agricultural (Education).—Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of agricultural education in England and Wales, with the minutes appointing the Committee and appendices; Minutes of evidence and index 1331

Colonies: Annual.—No. 565. (The Surveys of British Africa, Ceylon, and the Federated Malay States)—Annual Report of the Colonial Survey Committee. Third year, to June, 1908 1331

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Irish Universities Bill, 1908.—Revised draft of the articles of a charter for the University to have its seat, (i.) in Dublin; (ii.) in Belfast; for the constituent college at (i.) Cork; (ii.) Galway 1332

Trade Reports: Annual Series.—No. 4052 to 4059 1332

Irish Railways (Viceregal Commission).—Fourth Report of the Commissioners; Appendix 1332

Railway Employment Safety Appliances.—Third and Fourth Reports of the Committee 1332

Army.—Return for the year ended the 31st March, 1908, of pensions specially granted under Article 718, 1089, and 1124 of the Pay Warrant 1332

Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation.—Fourth Report of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, for the year 1907... 1332

Care and Control of the Feeble Minded (Royal Commission).—Report of Commissioners; minutes of evidence and appendices, Volumes I. to VII.... 1333

Civil Service Commission.—Fifty-second Report of His Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners; with appendices

Presented, and ordered to lie upon the Table 1333

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made by the Board of Trade ... 1333

Shop Hours Act, 1904 (County Borough of Newport).—Order made by the council of the county borough of Newport.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie upon the Table 1333

Friendly Societies Bill.—Read 1ª; to be be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Denman*). (No. 158) 1333

REDUCTIONS IN THE REGULAR ARMY.

Viscount Middleton... 1333
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1333

Old-Age Pensions Bill.—[SECOND READING].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Chanceller of the Duchy of Lancaster (*Viscount Wolverhampton*) ... 1335

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª"—(*Viscount Wolverhampton.*)

The Earl of Wemyss 1346

Amendment moved.

"To leave out all the words after the word 'That,' in order to insert these words 'pending the Report of the Royal Commission now inquiring into the principles and working of the existing Poor Law it would be unwise to enter upon the consideration of a Bill establishing the far reaching principle of State Old-Age Pensions.'"—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

Earl Cromer 1359
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1360
Viscount St. Aldwyn 1369
The Earl of Rosebery 1379
The Bishop of Ripon 1389
The Lord Privy Seal (*The Marquess of Ripon*) 1395
Lord Avebury 1402

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Lord Welby ... 1409

The Marquess of Landsdowne ... 1413

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (The Earl of Crewe) ... 1422

On Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Their Lordships divided—Contents, 123; Not Contents, 16.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Tobacco Growing (Scotland) Bill.—House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment, and re-committed to the Standing Committee ... 1433

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow ... 1433

Post Office Savings Bank Bill.—House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow ... 1433

House of Lords Offices.—Second Report from the Select Committee made; to be printed; and to be considered on Thursday next. (No. 159) ... 1433

Ireland (Constabulary in Proclaimed Counties).—Return respecting; Laid before the House, and to be printed (No. 160) ... 1433

Edinburgh and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Edinburgh and District Water—Was presented by the Lord Herschell (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 161) ... 1433

Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to amend the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907—Presented by the Earl of Crewe; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 162) ... 1433

House adjourned at five minutes before Twelve o'clock, till To-morrow, Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 20TH JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.—River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time ... 1434

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).—Post Office Sites Bill [Lords] ... 1434

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Lords Amendments considered; One Lords Amendment amended, and agreed to; Remaining Lords Amendments agreed to ... 1434

Glyngorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendment considered, and agreed to ... 1434

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Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [LORDS] (KING'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1434

Tollemache Estate Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 1435

Dover Graving Docks Bill (KING'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Bill read the third time, and passed 1435

Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time and committed 1435

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Lanark Corporation (Extension of Boundaries, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday 1435

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 1435

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords].

And also, a Bill, intituled, London Electric Supply Bill [Lords] ... 1435

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords] London Electric Supply Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1435

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 4 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1435

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Irish Universities Bill.—Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the University to have its seat in Belfast; to lie upon the Table 1436

Irish Universities Bill.—Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the University to have its seat in Dublin to lie upon the Table 1436

Irish Universities Bill.—Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the College to have its seat in Dublin to lie upon the Table 1436

Irish Universities Bill.—Revised Draft of the Articles of a New Charter for the Constituent College at Cork to lie upon the Table 1436

Irish Universities Bill.—Revised Draft of the Articles of a New Charter for the Constituent College at Galway to lie upon the Table 1436

Railway Employment (Safety Appliances),—Third and Fourth Reports of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to examine and, where necessary, to test appliances designed to diminish danger to men employed in Railway Service to lie upon the Table 1436

Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation.—Fourth Report of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation for the year 1907 to lie upon the Table 1436

Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Vols. I.–VII. to lie upon the Table 1437

Colonial Reports (Annual).—Colonial Report No. 565 (Surveys of British Africa, Ceylon, and the Federated Malay States, Annual Report of the Colonial Survey Committee) to lie upon the Table 1437

Civil Service Commission.—Fifty-second Report of the Commissioners to lie upon the Table ... 1437

Army (Special Pensions).—Return for the year ended 31st March, 1908, of pensions specially granted under Articles 718, 1089, and 1124 of the Pay Warrant to lie upon the Table ... 1437

Loans Contracted by Local Authorities.—Return presented, relative thereto, to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 238] ... 1437

Public Works Loans Bill.—Copy ordered, "of Statement of Particulars of Loans of which the balances outstanding are proposed to be remitted or written off (in whole or in part) from the Assets of the Local Loans Fund."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 239] ... 1437

Building Operations and Engineering Works Bill.—Address for "Return of Memorandum explanatory of the Building Operations and Engineering Works Bill."—(*Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) ... 1437

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

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Delivery of Irish Mails—Sligo Prosecution 1502
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Irish Arterial Drainage 1505
Ballymena Postal Facilities... 1505
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Irish Universities Bill 1506

Infant Life Protection (No. 2) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 240.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed [No. 240.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow and to be printed. [Bill 327] 1507

University of Durham Bill.—Reported with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 241]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 241.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow and to be printed. [Bill 328] 1507

Handloom Weaving (Ireland) Bill.—Reported, with an Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 242].

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 242.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 329] 1507

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 330] 1508

House of Lords (Manuscripts).—Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to request that their Lordships will be pleased to communicate to this House a Copy of the Manuscripts of the House of Lords, Volume IV. (New Series).—(*Sir Thomas Esmonde*) 1508

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).—Mr. STUART WORTLEY reported from the Chairmen's Panel.

Reports to lie upon the Table 1508

NEW BILLS.

Expiring Laws Continuance Bill.—Presented by Mr. Hobhouse; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 331] 1509

Political Offenders Punishment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 332] 1509

Deaths Registration and Burials Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 31st July, and to be printed. [Bill 333] 1509

Public Works Loans Bill.—Presented by Mr. Hobhouse; to be read a second time to-morrow; and to be printed. [Bill 334] 1509

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Licensing Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 :

Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 1510

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, at the begining, to insert the words 'Quarter Sessions on a reference from.'"—(*Mr. Younger.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1511
Viscount Morpeth (Birmingham, S.) 1511
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) 1512
Mr. Talbot (Oxford University) 1514
Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 1515
Sir Francis Lowe (Birmingham, Edgbaston) 1516
Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) 1517
Sir Thomas Whittaker (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley) 1517
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 1518
Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) 1520
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 1522
Mr. H. C. Lea (St. Pancras, E.) 1523
Mr. F. E. Smith (Liverpool, Walton) 1523
Mr. Leif Jones (Westmoreland, Appleby) 1526
Sir E. Carson (Dublin University) 1527
Mr. Asquith 1529
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1530
Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 1533
Mr. Lane-Fox (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) 1533
Mr. G. D. Faber (York) 1534
Sir John Randles (Cumberland, Cockermouth) 1535
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) 1536
Captain Faber (Hampshire, Andover) 1537
Mr. H. C. Lea 1538
Mr. Austin Taylor 1538
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1538
Mr. F. E. Smith 1540
Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 1540
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) 1541

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 126 ; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 202.)

Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 1545

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, at beginning, to insert the words 'A committee of the.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) ... 1549
Mr. F. E. Smith 1550
Sir George White (Norfolk, N.W.) 1552
Mr. Goulding (Worcester) 1554

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Mr. Asquith 1555
Sir E. Carson 1555
Mr. Lief Jones 1558
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 1561
Sir Thomas Whittaker 1561
Mr. James Hope (Sheffield, Central) 1562
Mr. Charles Roberts (Lincoln) 1564
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham)... 1565
Mr. Ashley... 1566
Mr. Nield (Middlesex, Ealing) 1567
Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) 1568
Captain Faber (Hampshire, Andover) 1570

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 122; Noes, 315. (Division List No. 203.)

Sir Francis Lowe 1574

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 8, line 8, after the words 'Licensing Justices,' to insert the words 'If it be shown to their satisfaction that the number of on-licenses in any district is excessive, having regard to the needs of the population."—(*Sir Francis Lowe.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. L. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 1578
Mr. Lupton (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 1578
Mr. F. E. Smith 1582
Mr. G. D. Faber (York) 1584
Mr. Nield (Middlesex, Ealing) 1586
Mr. Patrick White (Meath, N) 1587
Mr. L. Harcourt 1588
Mr. Younger 1588
Mr. Remnant (Finsbury, Holborn) 1590
Mr. Clavell Salter (Hampshire, Basingstoke) 1590
Mr. Lane-Fox 1591
Mr. Ashley 1592
Mr. Montagu (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton) 1593
Mr. Cave 1594
Sir F. Banbury 1595
Mr. Bertram (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) 1597
Mr. James Hope 1597

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

> "After the word 'if,' to insert the words 'on the presentation of a requisition signed by not less than one-tenth of the parochial electors in the district.'"—(*Mr. James Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted in the proposed Amendment."

Earl Winterton 1598
Mr. Lambton (Durham, S.E.) 1599
The Solicitor-General (Sir S. Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.) 1600
Mr. Walter Long 1601
Mr. Ashley... 1602
Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) 1603
Mr. Clavell Salter 1603
Sir F. Banbury 1603
Sir Francis Lowe 1604

Amendment to the Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. James Hope 1604

Amendment proposed to the Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, before the word 'on-licences' to insert the word 'full.'" —(*Mr. James Hope.*)

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 121 ; Noes, 310. (Division List No. 204.)

Earl Winterton 1609

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'justices' to insert the words 'unless they certify to the Secretary of State that it is unnecessary to do so,'"—(*Earl Winterton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Asquith 1610
Mr. A. J. Balfour 1610
Mr. F. E. Smith 1611
Sir F. Banbury 1612
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestershire, E.*) 1613
Sir S. Evans 1617
Lord R. Cecil 1618
Mr. Jesse Collings 1619

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 298 ; Noes, 122. (Division List No. 205.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 124 ; Noes, 290. (Division List No. 206.)

Committee report progress ; to sit again to-morrow.

Building Operations and Engineering Works Bill.—Return presented, relative thereto [Address 20th July ; *Mr. Secretary Gladstone*] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 243] 1632

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS : TUESDAY, 21ST JULY, 1908.

SAT FIRST.—The Lord Dunmore (*E. Dunmore*)—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Dover Graving Docks.

Also, no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills :—Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation ; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order ; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1633

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Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]; Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered, and agreed to 1633

Magee Presbyterian College (Londonderry) Bill [H.L.]—The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with 1633

Blackburn Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1633

Manchester Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1633

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1633

Gosport Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 1633

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment 1634

London County Council (Money) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment ... 1634

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 1634

Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill; South West Suburban Water Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons ... 1634

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to ... 1634

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to 1634

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 1634

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to, with an Amendment. The said Amendment considered, and agreed to 1634

Board of Trade (Provisional Orders) Bill [H.L.]; now Provisional Orders Procedure Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Amendments made. Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. [No. 167] 1634

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1634

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—Moved, "That the order made on the 25th day of March last. 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1635
The Chairman of Committees 1635

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bills read 2ª, accordingly and committed.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 9) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 11) Bill.

Lord Allendale 1636

Moved, "That the order made on the 25th day of March last, 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Allendale.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to and Bills read 2ª accordingly and committed.

Marriages Provisional Order Bill.

The Lord Steward (*Earl Beauchamp*) 1636

Moved, "That the Order made on the 25th day of March last, 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Beauchamp.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bill read 2ª accordingly and committed.

PETITION.

Municipal Franchise (Mercantile Corporations and Companies) Bill [H.L.].—Petition in favour of; read, and ordered to lie on the Table ... 1637

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

House of Lords (Manuscripts).—Message from the Commons for Copy of the Manuscripts of the House of Lords, Volume IV.—Ordered to be communicated accordingly 1637

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Report on the research work of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in relation to the plaice fisheries of the North Sea; Vol. I. Special Statistics. Size and Weight, 1905–1906 ... 1637

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—No. 4066–4070 1637

Victoria and Albert Museum, Bethnal Green Branch Museum, and Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street.—Regulations relating thereto 1637

Explosives Act, 1875.—Thirty-second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, for the year 1907 1637

Aliens Act, 1905.—Return of the alien passenger traffic between the United Kingdom and ports in Europe, or within the Mediterranean Sea, during the three months ended 30th June, 1908; together with the number of Expulsion Orders made during that period, requiring aliens to leave the United Kingdom.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1638

Destructive Insects and Pests Acts, 1877 and 1907.—Order, entitled The The American Gooseberry Mildew (Kent) Order of 1908 1638

Companies (Winding-up).—Seventeenth General Annual Report by the Board of Trade under Section 29 of the Companies (Winding-Up) Act, 1890 ... 1638

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Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Post).—The Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Amendment (No. 1) Warrant 1908, dated 2nd July, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1638

NEW BILL.

Public-Houses (Extension of Facilities) Bill [H.L.] Presented by the Lord Lamington; read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 163] 1638

Nurses Registration Bill.—Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Lord Ampthill 1638

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee."—(*Lord Ampthill.*)

The Earl of Mayo 1639
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1641
Lord Stanley of Alderley 1641
Lord Ashbourne 1645
Lord Ampthill 1646
The Marquess of Salisbury... 1649
Lord Kinnaird 1653

On Question, Motion agreed to; House in Committee accordingly; Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; Amendments made; Bill recommitted to a Committee of the Whole House, and to be printed as amended. (No. 164.)

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to Order).

The Earl of Crewe 1653

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'therefore' to insert the following new subsection:—'(2) The schedule to this Act may be amended by adding thereto or removing therefrom any article or by transferring any article from one part of the schedule to the other in the manner provided by Section 2 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, for adding to the list of articles deemed to be poisons within the meaning of that Act.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Ashbourne 1654

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

The Earl of Crewe 1654

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 5, after subsection (2) to insert the following new subsection. (3) A registered chemist or druggist may, notwithstanding anything in Section 15 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, take, use, or exhibit the name or title of pharmacist"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

Lord Ashbourne 1655

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow, and to be printed as amended. (No. 165.)

Wild Birds Bill [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read. ... 1655

Lord Balfour of Burleigh ... ...

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ."—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*) ... 1656

Earl Beauchamp ... ...

On Question, Bill read 2ᵃ, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Municipal Franchise (Mercantile Corporations and Companies) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair].

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 :

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Amendment moved—

> "After Clause 3, to insert the following new clause—'It shall be lawful for His Majesty the King, by Order in Council, from time to time to alter the instructions, precepts, notices and forms under the Registration of Electors Act, 1888, any other Act for the time being in force amending or affecting the Acts mentioned in this subsection, and the instructions, precepts, notices, and forms specified in any such Order in Council shall be observed and be valid by law, and clerks of the peace and town clerks and other officers shall act accordingly.'"—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Schedule :

Amendment moved, to leave out the Schedule.—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 166) 1656

Board of Trade (Provisional Orders) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order.)

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1 :

Lord Hamilton of Dalzell 1657

Amendment moved—

> "In page 1, line 7, after the word 'in,' to insert the words 'Part I. of.'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Hamilton of Dalzell 1658

Amendment moved—

> "In page 1, line 16, to leave out subsection (2) and to insert '(2) Any rules made in pursuance of this section shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable after they are made, and if either House of Parliament within the next forty days after any rules have been so laid before that House resolves that the rules or any of

them ought to be annulled, the rules or those to which the Resolution applies, shall after the date of such Resolution be of no effect, without prejudice to the validity of anything done in the meantime under the rules or to making of any new rules."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 1 to insert the following new clause 'This Act shall extend to the Local Government Board as respects Provisional Orders made by them under the enactments mentioned in Part II. of the First Schedule to this Act, with a substitution of a reference to the Local Government Board for the reference to the Board of Trade and with this modification, that sections two hundred a ninety-three to two hundred and ninety-six of the Public Health Act, 1875 (relating to inquiries by the Local Government Board) shall apply to inquiries held by that Board in pursuance of any rules made by that Board under this Act."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2:

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended agreed to.

Schedule:

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

Title:

Amendment moved—

"In the Title, page 1, after the word 'Trade' to insert the words 'and the Local Government Board.'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 167.)

Commons Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Viscount St. Aldwyn 1659

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, lines 5 and 6, to leave out the words 'for the purpose of maintaining or improving the breed of animals on the common.'"—(*Viscount St. Aldwyn.*)

The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (*Earl Carrington*) 1660

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Clinton 1660

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'and when made.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Clinton 1660

July 21.]

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out the words 'the times at which and.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

Earl Carrington 1660

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Earl Carrington 1661

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 12, after the word 'times,' to insert the words 'if any.'"—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

Viscount St. Aldwyn 1662
Lord Clinton 1662

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 20, after the word 'for,' to insert the words 'defraying expenses incurred in making, publishing, or.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Clinton 1662

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 24, after the word 'common,' to insert the words 'and for prescribing the person to receive or sue for such payments.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Clinton 1663

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 12, after the word 'animal,' to insert the words 'being a person entitled to turn out animals on the common,' and to leave out the word 'any' and to insert the word 'such.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

Earl Carrington 1663

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord Clinton 1664

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 26, to leave out the word 'common' to the end of subsection (3)"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

Earl Carrington 1665
Lord Kenyon 1665
Lord Belper 1665
The Earl of Onslow 1665
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) ... 1665

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 168.)

Coroners (Ireland) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1 agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 1, to insert the following new clause: 'The enactments mentioned in the schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of the schedule,' and to insert the following new schedule to the Bill—

Session and Chapter.	Short Title.	Extent of Repeal.
3 & 4 Vict. c. 108 - -	The Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act, 1840.	Section 156.
9 & 10 Vict. c. 37 -	The Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1846.	Section 39, from "except" to "District" where the latter word secondly occurs.
23 & 24 Vict. c. 74 - -	The Borough Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1860.	Section 2, from "provided always" to the end of the section.

—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 169) 1668

Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Clause 7:

Lord Atkinson 1669

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 7."—(*Lord Atkinson.*)

Lord Oranmore and Browne 1669

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8:

Lord Atkinson 1669

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 8, to leave out the word 'thing,' and insert the words 'or vehicle, whether the same be drawn by animal power or be propelled by other than animal power.'"—(*Lord Atkinson.*)

Lord Denman 1670
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1670

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Standing Committee negatived. The report of Amendment to be received To-morrow, and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 170.)

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Denman 1671

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Denman.*)

Lord Clonbrock 1673
The Earl of Mayo 1674
Lord Ashbourne 1676
Lord Denman 1678
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1678

On Question, Bill read the second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Post Office Savings Bank Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order) and passed ... 1679

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1679

REPAIRS TO H.M. SHIPS.

Lord Ellenborough 1680
The Earl of Granard 1680

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILKSHOPS (IRELAND).

The Earl of Onslow 1680

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a copy of the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops (Ireland) Order of the 3rd February, 1908, together with any correspondence addressed to local authorities in Ireland with respect to the said Order, either before or after the Order was made."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

Lord Allendale 1682
The Earl of Northbrook 1683
Lord Fitzmaurice 1684

On Question, Motion agreed to and ordered accordingly.

ARMY OFFICERS AT OLYMPIA.

Lord Heneage 1687
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*Lord Lucas*) 1687

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IRELAND).

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a return of loans contracted by local authorities in Ireland, with: (1) The amount which they are entitled to borrow and the limitation in Section 238 of the Act of 1878: (2) The amount they have so borrowed up to the present; (3) The amount of the last-mentioned total which would be placed outside the limitation of the Act of 1878 by the present Bill."—(*The Earl of Mayo*).

Lord Denman 1688

Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 21ST JULY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1688

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [Lords]; Leith Burgh Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1689

Private Bills (Group K).—Sir GEORGE WHITE reported from the Committee on Group K. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at Twelve of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 1689

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1689

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [LORDS].—Reported, with an Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1689

Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [LORDS].—Reported, with an Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1689

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [LORDS].—Reported with an Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1689

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [LORDS].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]: Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Bill to be considered To-morrow 1689

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [LORDS].—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1689

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS—That they have agreed to:—Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment; Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to:—Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]. Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

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That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Crofting Parishes (Scotland) Bill [Lords.]

And also a Bill, intituled, Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.] 1690

Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. —Ordered (under Section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered To-morrow 1690

PETITIONS.

Dairies (Scotland) Bill—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table ... 1690

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1690

Licensing Bill.—4 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 14 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1691

Port of London Bill.—Petition against, praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table 1691

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Inland Revenue.—Fifty-first Report of the Commissioners for the year ended 31st March, 1908: to lie upon the Table 1691

Companies (Winding-Up).—Seventeenth General Annual Report by the Board of Trade under Section 29 of the Companies (Winding-Up) Act, 1890; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 244] 1691

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Report on the Research Work of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in relation to the Plaice Fisheries of the North Sea. Vol. I. Special Statistics (Size and Weight), 1905–6 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1691

Destructive Insects and Pests Acts, 1877 and 1907.—Order dated 17th July, 1908, entitled the American Gooseberry Mildew (Kent) Order of 1908; to lie upon the Table 1691

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4006 to 4070; to lie upon the Table 1691

Explosives.—Thirty-second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, being for the year 1907; to lie upon the Table 1692

Aliens Act, 1905.—Return of the Alien Passenger Traffic between the United Kingdom and Ports in Europe or within the Mediterranean Sea during the three months ending 30th June, 1908; together with the number of Expulsion Orders made during that period requiring Aliens to leave the United Kingdom; to lie upon the Table 1692

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Post).—The Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908, to lie upon the Table 1692

Board of Education.—Regulations relating to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bethnal Green Branch Museum, and the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street; to lie upon the Table 1692

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NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Walter Francis Roch, esquire, for the County of Pembroke ... 1739

Endowed Schools (Masters) Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 335] ... 1739

Trusts Bill.—First Special Report from the Select Committee brought up, and read. [Inquiry not completed.]

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 245] ... 1739

Licensing Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee).

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair].

On Clause 1—

Mr. Gretton (Rutland) ... 1739

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'shall,' to insert the words 'in any municipal borough or urban district having a population according to the last Census for the time being of over ten thousand.'"—(*Mr. Gretton.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 1741

Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 1743
Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 1745
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 1746
Mr. Talbot (Oxford University) 1749
Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 1750

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. James Hope (Sheffield, Central) 1752

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, to leave out the word 'reduce' and to insert the word 'adjust.'"—(*Mr. James Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'reduce' stand part of the clause."

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 1753
Mr. F. E. Smith (Liverpool, Walton) 1753
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1754
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1759
Mr. Seddon (Lancashire, Newton) 1755
Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) 1760
Mr. Asquith 1762
Sir E. Carson (Dublin University)... 1764
Sir Thomas Whittaker (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley) 1764
Mr Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) 1765
Mr. Lane Fox (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) 1767
Mr. Bertram (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) 1768
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) 1769
Mr. Markham (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) 1770
Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon)... 1771
Mr. William Rutherford (Liverpool, West Derby)... 1772
Mr. W. E. Harvey (Derbyshire, N.E.) 1774
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 1775
Mr. Joynson-Hicks (Manchester, N.W.) 1776
Mr. Herbert 1776
Mr. Patrick White (Meath, N.) 1778
Mr. James Hope 1778

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 326; Noes, 127. (Division List No. 207.)

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 1783

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'of,' to insert the word 'old.'"—(*Mr. Samuel Roberts.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'old' be there inserted."

Mr. Asquith ... 1785
Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 1787
Mr. Cave ... 1787
Sir S. Evans ... 1787

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Talbot ... 1788

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, to leave out the word 'on.' '—(*Mr. Talbot.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'on' stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Gladstone ... 1791
Mr. Bonar Law (Camberwell, Dulwich) ... 1794
Mr. F. E. Smith ... 1795
Mr. Herbert Samuel ... 1797
Mr. Lambton (Durham, S. E) ... 1800
Mr. McLean (Bath) ... 1801
Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 1802
Sir Thomas Whittaker ... 1804
Mr. G D. Faber (York) ... 1807
Mr. Nield (Middlesex, Ealing) ... 1811
Mr. Seddon (Lancashire, Newton) ... 1813
Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) ... 1814
Mr. Leif Jones (Westmoreland, Appleby) ... 1815
Mr. Harmood-Banner (Liverpool, Everton) ... 1818
Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) ... 1819
Mr. Cameron Corbett (Glasgow, Tradeston) ... 1820
Mr. Patrick White ... 1820
Mr. Walter Long ... 1821
Mr. Joynson-Hicks ... 1824
Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) ... 1828
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) ... 1828
Mr. Lupton (Lancashire, Sleaford)... 1831
Mr. Markham ... 1832
Mr. J. F. Mason ... 1833

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 306; Noes, 126. (Division List No. 208.)

Mr. F. E. Smith ... 1837

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'on-licences,' to insert the words 'except licences for the sale of beer upon the premises which were in existence before the year eighteen hundred and sixty-nine.' "—*Mr. F. E. Smith.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Herbert Samuel ... 1839
Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 1840

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 140; Noes, 354. (Division List No. 209.)

And, it being after half-past Ten of the Clock, the CHAIRMAN proceeded pursuant to the Order of the House of 17th July, to put forthwith the Question of an Amendment moved by the Government of which notice had been given, and on any Questions necessary to dispose of the Business to be concluded this day.

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 21, at end, to insert the words 'and for the purposes of the definition of an "urban area" a metropolitan borough shall be deemed to be a borough, and where part of a ward of a borough or urban district is situated in one licensing district and part in another, each such part of the ward shall be treated as part of the ward with which it has the longest common boundary in the same licensing district.' "—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

Question put, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 348 ; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 210.)

Motion made, and Question, "That the CHAIRMAN do report Progress ; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress ; to sit again upon Monday next.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [LORDS] [BY ORDER].—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Mooney (*Newry*) 1851

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [LORDS] [BY ORDER].—Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. Timothy Davies (*Fulham*) 1852
Mr. B. S. Straus (*Tower Hamlets, Mile End*) 1853

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day three months.' "—(*Mr. Timothy Davies.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Guinness (*Bury St. Edmunds*) 1855
Mr. Waterlow (*Islington, N.*) 1857

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Registration Bill [H.L.]—Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 :

Mr. Forster (*Kent, Sevenoaks*) 1858

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 21, to leave out the words 'the said.' "—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 21, after the word 'section,' to insert the words '42 of the said Act.'"—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 1858
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1858

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2. and schedule agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Grand Jury (Ireland) Act (1836), Amendment Bill.—Order for the Second Reading read.

The Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.) 1859

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1859
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 1860

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Naval Lands (Volunteers) Bill [SECOND READING].—Order for the Second Reading read.

The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) ... 1862

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. McKenna,*)—put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To morrow.—(*Mr. McKenna.*)

Married Women's Property Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 1862

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at thirteen minutes before Twelve o'clock.

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

TENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 9th July, 1908.

The Lord Brancepeth (*V. Boyne*).—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5).

Also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Crystal Palace Company Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a}. Amendments made. — Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

Camborne Water Bill.—Read 3^{a}, and passed.

Manchester Corporation Bill ; Burnley Corporation Bill ; Blackburn Corporation Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Stradbroke be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Monk Bretton ; read, and agreed to.

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill ; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed.

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Falkirk and District Water. Was presented by the Lord Herschell ; read 1^{a} ; to be printed ; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Section 7); deemed to have been read 2^a; and reported from the Committee. (No. 135.)

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MINT.

Thirty-eighth Annual Report of the Deputy-Master and Comptroller of the Mint, 1907.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

1. Scheme for a new teachers' registration council proposed to the Board of Education by the representatives of certain educational associations.

2. Regulations for technical schools, schools of art, and other forms of provision of further education in England and Wales (from 1st August, 1908, to 31st, July, 1909).

TRANSVAAL.

Papers relating to the form of contract in use in connection with the recruitment of native labourers for the Transvaal mines in Portuguese East Africa.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

The Lord Leith of Fyvie discharged from further attendance on the Joint Committee, and the Lord Dawnay (*V. Downe*) added to the Committee in his place.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3^a on Monday next.

THRIFT AND CREDIT BANKS BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

LORD DENMAN said the first Amendment standing in his name was of a drafting character, and he did not think it would receive any opposition from the noble Lord in charge of the Bill.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 1, line 5, to leave out the words 'having for its object,' and insert the words '(hereinafter referred to as a thrift and credit bank), whose rules provide that its object shall be.'"—(*Lord Denman.*)

LORD WENLOCK said he was quite prepared to accept the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD DENMAN moved to amend Clause 1, which ran—

> "A society having for its object the creation, by means of the receipt of deposits and of borrowing moneys at interest, of funds to be lent out to the members of the society or for their benefit may (subject to the provisions of this Act), on submitting to the chief registrar rules in conformity with the provisions of this Act, be certified by the chief registrar to carry on business as a thrift and credit bank within the area specified in such rules, and upon the grant of such a certificate the rules shall have effect accordingly."

By leaving out all words from the word "benefit" to the end of the clause, and inserting the words—

> "Either alone or in conjunction with trading or co-operative principles may, on complying with the provisions of this Act, be registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act)."

As he had a number of Amendments on the Paper on behalf of the Treasury, he thought it would be for the convenience of their Lordships if he now explained the scope and objects of those Amendments.

From a mere glance at the Amendments it might be supposed that the Government were endeavouring to follow the practice, not unknown during the last year or two in their Lordships' House, of wrecking a Bill by Amendments in the Committee stage after it had passed Second Reading. That was not their intention at all. They were just as anxious as the noble Lord in charge of the Bill to encourage thrift and similar qualities, more particularly in agricultural districts where it was evident that the best results could be obtained from a Bill of this character. The Amendments, long though they were, really dealt with only one or two points. Before explaining exactly the bearing of the Amendments he would state briefly the history and constitution of friendly societies. In the year 1905 the friendly societies and affiliated orders numbered 27,000 different bodies, with an aggregate membership of nearly 6,000,000 and accumulated funds amounting to £42,000,000. The societies had been of slow but steady growth, and had taken many years to reach these large dimension.

More than 100 years had elapsed since the first legislation dealing with the subject was brought before Parliament. In the year 1793 the first Act of its kind was passed for raising separate funds for the mutual relief and maintenance of members in sickness, old age, and infirmity. By an Act passed in 1850 it was enacted that a society might be established for other objects, in particular for procuring for its members food, lodging, clothing, and other necessaries, by exercising and carrying on in common their respective trades and handicrafts. In this way the provisions in the Industrial and Provident Societies Act were introduced. Other Bills were brought before Parliament and passed into law, until, in the year 1870, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole question of the working of friendly societies. This Royal Commission came to the conclusion that it was necessary for the successful working of these societies that the two objects of banking and trading should be kept separate and distinct. The Commission reported in the year 1874, and in 1875 and 1876 Acts were passed which provided, on the one hand, for the friendly societies, and, on the other, for industrial and provident societies. Under the one banking operations and under the other trading operations could be performed, and since that time various Acts had been passed carefully keeping these two functions entirely distinct so far as the friendly societies were concerned.

The Bill now before their Lordships would permit banking and trading to be carried out by the same society, which would reverse the practice and legislation of Parliament for over thirty years. He had always learned in their Lordships' House, and more particularly in Committee-rooms upstairs, that they must be very careful how legislation of this character affected Acts of Parliament that already existed. Parliament had decided, after the most careful consideration and after the Report of a Royal Commission, not to permit friendly societies to perform banking and trading functions. The noble Lord made his Bill ancillary to the Friendly Societies Act, which would bring it into conflict with existing legislation, and the Government were not prepared to give their consent to this particular provision.

The promoters of the Bill had a particular reason for making it ancillary to the Friendly Societies Act. Under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, whereby they could carry on trading, they could not obtain the provision of unlimited liability. What they desired to do was to bring this Bill under the Friendly Societies Act, so as to be enabled to introduce the principle of unlimited liability. That raised a very serious point and on behalf of the Treasury he had to say that they were not prepared to give their consent to that. There were obvious objections to the principle of unlimited liability—first, that people of means would not be prepared to join such societies; secondly, that many people who had little or nothing to lose would join, because in any case they could not come to any harm. It was not very desirable that well-to-do people should abstain from joining, and people who had nothing at all to lose should form the bulk of the membership.

It was better that there should be a definite liability, so that people joining one of these societies would know exactly what liabilities they incurred. All might go well if the societies were carefully managed and times were ordinarily prosperous, but supposing that they were badly managed, or we came on times of distress, not only might all the members be involved in ruin, but many other people would be affected as well. One of the promoters of the Bill had told him that the principle of unlimited liability was the keystone of the Bill. One of the results of the Bill in village life would be that if they induced people to join these societies they would not only encourage them, but would compel them, to pry into one another's affairs in order to ascertain how each stood financially. He had always been given to understand that one of the drawbacks of village life in this country was that, if anything, people knew rather too much about their neighbours; but if this Bill became law that disadvantage would be accentuated.

If a man of means were persuaded to pay, say, £5 into one of these banks in order to aid in starting its operations, that unfortunate person might have everything he possessed taken from him, under this Bill, to meet the bank's liabilities. If he were the only solvent person in the village, being a prudent man, he might resign his membership of the society; but under the Bill, he would be liable for twelve months after the date of his resignation for any debts of the society as they existed when his membership ceased; or if, worn out by the system of espionage which appeared to be contemplated, and by the knowledge that the society was working badly, he broke down and died, his estate would be liable for a year for the debts of the society as they existed at the time of his decease. He thought such provisions were entirely without precedent in an Act of Parliament.

Some noble Lords might remember the terrible ruin which, in certain cases, was brought about as a result of the principle of unlimited liability—the ruin of the Glasgow bank was a well-known example. Surely their Lordships should hesitate before accepting such a principle as that. He would put it to the noble Viscount on the Front Opposition Bench, Lord St. Aldwyn, whether, if he were still controlling the affairs of the Treasury, he would find it possible to give his assent to such a provision being passed into law. One of the able gentlemen, acting with Lord Wenlock in this matter had represented that if his (Lord Denman's) Amendments were carried it would be a fatal blow to the Bill. He had, accordingly, arranged a meeting, at which the registrar of friendly societies and an official of the Treasury were present, to consider if compromise were possible in regard to the Bill, and the conclusion arrived at was that it was not possible. The main question was whether the Committee were prepared to accept the principle of unlimited liability.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out from the word 'benefit' to the end of the clause, and to insert the words 'either alone or in conjunction with trading on co-operative principles may, on complying with the provisions of this Act, be registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act).'"—(*Lord Denman.*)

*Lord WENLOCK said he had heard with much surprise that noble Lords on the Ministerial side of the House deprecated legislation which was likely to run counter to the existing law of the land. This Bill was an attempt to burst the bonds of red tape with which small societies were hampered, and to place them in a position similar to that in which more than 20,000 societies were working with advantage in different parts of the world. Under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act they would not be able to carry on their work. They could only proceed on the lines indicated in the Bill. The noble Lord had drawn a very harrowing picture of what he thought might occur; but the experience of the 20,000 societies to which he had referred showed that his fears were unfounded. His noble friend the ex-Viceroy of India introduced an Act upon similar lines for the benefit of the ryots of India, and, although it had been in existence only about three years, the measure was doing incalculable good. The Bill would prove beneficial in the United Kingdom, especially in Ireland. The principle of unlimited liability, as described by the noble Lord opposite, might present a doubtful appearance; but the Bill provided that the members of a society, at their annual general meeting, should fix the amount of liability, *i.e.* the maximum about to be lent out by their society in any one year, as well as the maximum sum lent to each individual. The system had worked with such great advantage elsewhere that he was told that there was not a single shilling in default in any of the 20,000 societies which he had mentioned. The system had been found to do good in Germany and other parts of Europe, and in certain parts of the East. He strongly opposed the Amendment, and had no hesitation whatever in saying that it would be perfectly impossible to carry on these societies except on the lines indicated in the Bill.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN said the noble Lord in moving the Amendment had appealed so directly to him on this matter that he felt bound to trouble their Lordships with a few observations, although he had not prepared himself, as he would have wished, with regard to this somewhat complicated and difficult subject. He did not happen to be present in their Lordships' House on the occasion of the Second Reading, and his attention had only just been directed to the Bill. Therefore he had not been able to go into the details of the question or consider much of the matter which Lord Denman had very clearly presented to their Lordships.

He thought his noble friend in charge of the Bill had some reason to complain of the action of His Majesty's Government in this matter. What were the words with which the noble Earl the Leader of the House greeted this Bill on Second Reading? The noble Earl said—

> "We quite agree as to the great benefits which may accrue from the formation of credit banks for agricultural purposes such as those favoured by my noble friend, and therefore we cordially assent to the Second Reading while reserving such criticisms as we think necessary for the Committee stage."

Could it have been anticipated that those words indicated the amount of opposition which was now offered on behalf of the Government? The noble Lord had attacked root and branch what he understood to be the principle of the measure. In fact, his noble friend who had introduced it went so far as to say that unless this principle could be accepted the Bill would not be proceeded with. Surely that was a matter which should have been discussed and dealt with on Second Reading rather than by an Amendment moved in Committee. But he was impressed by what the noble Lord opposite had said as to the possible mischiefs of unlimited liability. The unlimited liability which his noble friend desired to establish was, he understood, the unlimited liability, not of those who borrowed money from these societies, but of the members who were liable for the debts of the societies. That might become, as Lord Denman had pointed out, a very serious matter indeed for such members. With regard to banks generally throughout the country, everybody now felt that limited liability was the proper principle on which banking should be conducted. It was quite true that for thirty years or more Parliament had drawn a great distinction between the powers of industrial and provident societies and those of friendly societies, and had prevented friendly societies from entering upon trading or banking functions; and he thought everybody who was interested in friendly societies would feel that they ought not to enter upon such objects. But the question before the Committee was whether this particular class of banks should he allowed the unlimited liability which his noble friend sought to establish on their behalf. These societies, as his noble friend had said, did exist in large numbers already, and, so far as he knew, they were proceeding very prosperously and with great benefit to many persons. Sir Horace Plunkett had taken a great part in establishing societies of this kind in Ireland, and he believed noble Lords from Ireland would say that much good had been done in that country by the working of these societies. He understood that they were worked now under the principle of limited liability, and what this Bill would do would be to extend that to unlimited liability. They were told that the societies could not continue their work on the principle of limited. liability. As to whether that was so or not, he was not prepared to say.

He hardly knew what to advise his noble friend to do in the position created by the action of the Government. He felt, on the one hand, that limited liability was the right principle. On the other hand, he would be very sorry to do anything that would check the growth and successful working of these societies. There was not, however, the scope for the operations of these societies in Great Britain that there was in Ireland. No country in the world could compare with Great Britain for banking facilities; there were fewer such facilities in Ireland, and therefore it was that these societies had been established and worked successfully there rather than in Great Britain. Whether it was in the circumstances worth while to press the matter to a division was for his noble friend to decide.

LORD WENLOCK inquired whether he correctly understood the noble Viscount to say that the societies in Ireland were worked now under the principle of limited liability.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN said he was not personally acquainted with their working, but he believed they were worked at present on the principle of limited liability.

LORD WENLOCK said the societies in question had been working for fourteen years under the Friendly Societies Act with unlimited liability.

LORD AVEBURY was in much the same position as th noble Viscount who had just spoken. He was under the impression that His Majesty's Government were satisfied generally with the Bill, and that the Amendments they intended to introduce would be merely of a drafting character. At the same time he had been very much impressed by the arguments brought forward by Lord Denman, and could not help feeling that there was great force in what the noble Lord had said. The general tendency in banking legislation had been from unlimited to limited liability, and that was felt on the whole to be very healthy. He would be very glad to see the Bill come into operation, but he did not quite understand why the change from unlimited liability to limited liability should be regarded as fatal to the Bill. Perhaps his noble friend would be good enough to explain why he had so much opposition to the Amendment now proposed by the Government, which, *prima facie*, seemed to have very much to recommend it.

LORD WENLOCK said the reason which had actuated the promoters of the Bill in favour of unlimited liability was that the societies which had been started in Austria, Hungary, and Germany on the principle of the limited liability of the members had broken down and failed completely. If the Amendment were carried the promoters would be obliged to drop the Bill, because they felt that if such a condition were imposed upon them, it would make it impossible for these banks to be conducted with success.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I am disposed to accept with some humility the mild chastisement which the noble Viscount inflicted upon His Majesty's Government with regard to this Bill. It is perfectly true that on the occasion of the Second Reading I did express warm sympathy with the objects of my noble friend opposite. I have always taken an interest in this question, and I recognise that these credit banks would, under certain circumstances, be of no small convenience in, at any rate, the rural parts of the United Kingdom.

I quite admit also that the present banking facilities, large as they are, do not in every case meet the needs of those districts. That, I think, has particularly been the case since the very wide substitution of joint stock banks for private banks. Private bankers in the country were more used to make small loans to small people on the strength of character rather than of financial stability than is the case with the joint stock banks by which they have been so largely superseded. So far, I fully admit that part of my noble friend's case. I very much regret that some conference did not take place before instead of after the Second Reading, between my noble friend and those who act with him and the Treasury. I think it would have been altogether more satisfactory.

It was hoped that some *modus vivendi* might have been reached on this matter, but it certainly does appear from what my noble friend behind me has said that, as matters stand, that is not possible. I can only suggest that, as the Treasury, before whom we all bow, are inexorably opposed to this particular provision in the Bill, the matter must stand aside for further consideration. I cannot see that it would be of any advantage to my noble friend to proceed with the Bill this session. If we can devise some means, whether by a Committee or some other procedure, for a closer consideration of the merits and demerits of his particular proposal, I hope we may be able to arrive at some agreement. But, in the absence of agreement on this particular point—a point which I do not propose to argue at this moment—it seems to me that my noble friend would really gain nothing by proceeding further with his Bill at this moment.

THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I cannot help thinking that my noble friend who has charge of this Bill would do well to accept the suggestion which has just fallen from the Leader of the House. It seems to me to be clearly a case where it is absolutely necessary that the matter should stand aside, to use the noble Earl's phrase, for further consideration. For what has happened? As has already been pointed out when this Bill came up for Second Reading it was received with very general encouragement by His Majesty's Government. The expression of the noble Earl who leads the House was that he gave his cordial consent to the Second Reading of the Bill, but that he desired to reserve certain criticisms for the Committee stage. I ask your Lordships to look at the Bill by the side of the Amendments tabled by Lord Denman. Omitting the interpretation clause and the short title, the Bill consists of eleven clauses. The noble Lord who represents the Government proposes to strike out no less than nine of these eleven, leaving only Clause 1 and 2, in which he proposes to make very considerable alterations. Such a process of restoration leaves uncommonly little of the original work of art, and I cannot help thinking that the only course open to your Lordships is to adjourn this discussion, and that my noble friend who has charge of the Bill should consider, perhaps after some such conference as was suggested by the noble Earl opposite, what further course he should take.

LORD WENLOCK said that, after what had fallen from the noble Marquess, the Leader of the Opposition and other speakers, he was quite prepared to adjourn the discussion.

Debate adjourned accordingly, and House resumed.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[THIRD READING.]

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."—(*Lord Herschell.*)

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, before we absolutely part from this Bill I should like to make a few observations in regard to the history of it, both before its arrival in this House and during its passage through this House. I venture to think that your Lordships' House has grave reason to complain of the whole course of action taken in regard to this measure by His Majesty's Government. It was first, I think, put forward mainly to get rid of the alleged grievance resulting from the undue holding up of land supposed to be ripe for building. But it contained a very great deal which went far beyond what was necessary for achieving that, in my humble opinion, laudable object.

I am satisfied in my own mind—I cannot, of course, state it with absolute certainty, but that is how it looks according to the evidence—that the underlying object in the minds, at any rate, of some members of His Majesty's Government was either to commit this House to the acceptance of very far-reaching principles in the matter of reform of taxation, or else to use the rejection of this Bill as a counter in the game of agitation against your Lordships' House, an agitation which had somewhat more prominence given to it last year than during the present year. I venture to say that the whole subject of local taxation, and in that I include our whole system of taxation upon land, is one which is second to none in importance; but it is a most intricate and difficult subject and demanded most careful and almost judicial treatment. But from the first, from the moment when the Bill was introduced, members of His Majesty's Government spoke with very different voices in regard to the objects that were being aimed at.

As at first introduced, it was, in my humble opinion, one of the most crude and ill-considered Bills that have ever been thrown on the Table of either House of Parliament. It was amended, with very inadequate discussion, during its passage through the other House in the small hours of the morning, and it reached this House last year in the concluding hours of the session. Your Lordships, under the guidance of the noble and learned Lord, Lord Robertson, refused to accept the Second Reading of the Bill last year; and, in my humble opinion, the House was amply justified in taking that course. That was not, at any rate, the view last year of the late Prime Minister, because, in addressing a meeting of his supporters on 5th October in Edinburgh, he placed this Bill and the Small Holdings Bill in the very forefront of the effort to raise an outcry against the constitutional exercise by this House of its legislative functions.

The words of the late Prime Minister, speaking in October, were these—

> "The Land Values Bill, which did no more than throw upon the local authorities the simple duty of valuing the land apart from the buildings upon its surface, was incontinently rejected, and I say this rejection was a piece of arrogance and high-handedness which marks the extreme pretensions of the House of Lords."

That was at the commencement of the autumn campaign. Whether that agitation realised all the anticipations of noble Lords opposite is a matter for them to consider: but on 12th February this year the Prime Minister had rather changed his view. Speaking then in the House of Commons he said—

> "It is to gratify Lord Lansdowne's view that there was no precedent for passing such a Bill within twenty-four hours of the Prorogation, which I admit is a reasonable one, that we re-introduce both of these Bills in the earliest days of the session."

If our action last year having regard to the circumstances under which it was taken was reasonable, it would have been more dignified—I think, also, more wise—to have said so in October at Edinburgh rather than have waited till the end of the agitation.

The Bill came back to your Lordships in exactly the same form as that in which this House rejected it last year; but in the meantime, in the course of the agitation which was pursued in the recess against this House, the Bill was held up in the country as an enormous reform, as a great alteration of the whole basis on which local taxation was to be imposed; and it was promised over and over again in definite words, by more than one member of the Government that all the rates were to go upon the land as valued under the provisions of this Bill. The provisions of this Bill for valuing land are, in my humble opinion, open to a good deal of the animadversion which was passed upon them by Lord Stanley of Alderley, who spoke upon the Report stage; and I venture to say that the idea of putting all the rates in Scotland, both of the owner and the occupier—that was stated in terms—upon land values as defined by this Bill could only be adequately described, as it was described by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack the moment his attention was called to it, as—

> "the most unmitigated nonsense."

It is because of these very different versions of the Bill that I think this House has grave reason to complain of the course which has been taken in regard to it.

There remains the point of the substitution of capital value for annual value as the basis of valuation and of subsequent taxation. No one can deny that that is a wholly new idea; nor can it be denied that, so far as our existing system of valuation is concerned, it is an absolute revolution. I will not labour this point. But in England, from the time of the Act of Elizabeth, the criterion of valuation was what the hypothetical tenant would give, and in Scotland the annual rent, if that annual rent was fixed for not more than twenty-one years; and in both these cases the object in view was to test, however roughly, the ability of those interested in the subject to be rated. I put it to the House, and I state fearlessly that there has never been any adequate discussion, either in Parliament or in the country, by a Commission or other form of inquiry, in which this proposal to substitute capital for annual value has been threshed out in all its bearings; and I venture most respectfully, but as strongly as I can, to say that capital value cannot possibly afford any such criterion of the ability of the owner to bear taxation.

If it is the case that the land can be let with a covenant for immediate building, it is immaterial which basis is chosen; but if land which is not ripe for immediate building and has only a prospective value were to be rated on capital value it would not only mean an immensely heavier burden, but it would very soon have the effect of rating all the value out of the subject altogether. Capital value, however you ascertain it, and a percentage taken upon it, would give, and must give, a result far in excess of the real annual value. I should have thought it was a commonplace in economical discussion that taxation which falls on capital in the strict sense must diminish the sum of the community's wealth, and that if you use capital value of property as the basis of taxation you cannot avoid trenching on the accumulated resources of the nation; and I suggest, as a second difficulty, that capital value is not really a fair test as between owner and owner, because some forms of capital give to the owner a much lower return than other forms. If you are to gauge for local purposes fairly, as between man and man, his ability to bear taxation, you must do it mainly on what he puts into his pocket and not on what it is supposed he owns. You have relieved —and, as I think, rightly relieved— personal property and stock-in-trade from local rates; but if you have relieved that form of capital value, surely it is an aggravation of the injustice to rate land on its capital value and to rate it alone amongst all the subjects which are now liable to rating.

I certainly acquit those members of His Majesty's Government who have spoken for themselves in this House of any complicity with the doctrines of the late Mr. Henry George, but beyond all question some friends of the Government accept those principles and have avowed their intention of rating and taxing landlords out of existence. I venture to say that if we had accepted this Bill as it was brought to this House it would have been pleaded against us, with more less force, that we had in fact gone some way in accepting those doctrines. What is the use of ascertaining capital value if you are not going to rate upon it? If you are going to rate upon it you are accepting those principles, while if you are not going to rate upon it you are putting a great burden upon the local authorities to ascertain that which is to be turned to no real account. Rating on capital value would be one of the surest means of affording the opportunity to those to whom I have alluded of carrying out their object.

I venture to say that if we are to go forward on this path, if we are ever to change the basis of local rating from annual to capital value, it should be done only after the fullest, fairest, and frankest discussion, and on the responsibility of the Government as a whole, speaking with one voice, after taking Parliament fairly and fully into their confidence and after laying the whole of their scheme before Parliament. An endeavour should not be made in this fragmentary form to commit us to principles which, in my opinion, would be most mischievous, and would aggravate any injustice and unfairness in the system of local taxation as it exists at the present time.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, your Lordships might think it disrespectful on my part to the noble Lord who has just spoken if I said nothing in answer to his criticisms, and I should be very sorry to be thought to show him any disrespect. But I think I should be regarded as tedious if I were to enter again into the subject of capital as against annual value. The Bill has been discussed at every stage during two successive years, and I think we have got about as far as we can get. I hope, therefore, I may be excused if I observe some brevity.

The noble Lord again seems to think that I rest my defence of this Bill solely on the ground that some land is held up. I will not say more than this, that I have repeatedly disclaimed that restriction. The second point which the noble Lord made was that rating ought not to be upon capital value but upon annual value. In one sense the two things may be the same. As my noble friend Lord Crewe has pointed out, you can always ascertain the capital value by multiplying the annual value by so many years purchase. Similarly you can always deduce from the capital value what the annual value would be by assuming that a certain percentage fairly represents a proper percentage on the capital. If you give me the true value, that which would be given in the open market to-morrow, I do not care whether it is put in the form of capital or annual value. Therefore it is, if I may say so, to elude the whole point of the distinction to dwell simply upon the difference between capital and annual value. The annual value as we now know it represents the annual value of the use. The use governs the value, and that is what I think is unfair to the other ratepayers.

The noble Lord had two apprehensions. He seemed to think that the Bill constituted an attempt to induce this House in some subtle way, without knowing it, to assent to the principles of the late Mr. Henry George. My Lords, we should be bold men indeed, if we thought we could make any approach towards the principles of Henry George by any amount of persuasion in your Lordships' House. For my part I have no sympathy at all—I have already expressed my view—with the doctrine of transferring all rates to the land. Then the noble Lord seemed to think we were animated by another motive—that of finding some ammunition for the purpose of fighting your Lordships' House on this Bill. I may say, frankly, that I think this Government has not been very handsomely treated by your Lordships' House; but, at the same time, is it not possible to suppose that the public interest and the desire to remedy a grievance, the existence of which has been admitted by the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition in the course of these debates, may have had something to do with the introduction of this Bill?

The real truth is that the Bill imposes no taxation whatever. It is a Bill which proposes to have a valuation of site value as opposed to that of the buildings upon it, and the Amendment which was supported by the whole of your Lordships on the Opposition side of the House accepted that principle. After all, His Majesty's Government represent the people of this country for the time being, however unworthily, and is it not fair—I hope your Lordships will excuse a certain amount of frankness on my part on this subject—is it not fair that you should look at our Bills and assume that it is just possible that we may have some fair object in view and not an ulterior one? We feel that we are not credited with having any good intention in regard to legislation that we bring forward in your Lordships' House; but I will say no more about it.

We have had enough discussion already upon this Bill to show that the subject is of itself extremely difficult and complicated. No one knows that better than the noble Lord himself, for he was the chairman of the Royal Commission which investigated the matter. Judging from the inexplicable criticisms that I see in the newspapers and also, if I may say so, that I hear in debate, I think that the subject has not yet been thought out by a good many people who oppose it. What is at the bottom of this Bill is fair play to all the ratepayers and not robbery of anybody. The Amendments your Lordships have introduced are such as I am afraid make the Bill one which cannot possibly work if passed, and which has very little prospect of passing at all. All we can do is to put forward our proposals, and if they are rejected by your Lordship's House to commend them to the sense of the country.

On Question, Bill read 3^a, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ADMISSION OF THE PRESS) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: My, Lords, the object of this Bill, briefly, is to ensure that representatives of the Press shall be allowed to attend meetings of local authorities unless such attendance is contrary to the public interest in a particular instance. The Bill comes up from another place, where one or two small objections that were made to its provisions were met by those who drafted it; and I am informed that the only alterations suggested by the County Councils Association and the Municipal

Corporations Association were agreed to and embodied in the Bill. The Bill, therefore, left another place, I think I may say, practically an agreed measure.

Reporters have attended meetings of local authorities hitherto practically without exception; but in the case of the Tenby Corporation and Mason a decision was given, which I have no doubt was perfectly correct in law, but which came as a great surprise to everybody having experience in this matter. That decision lays it down that the Press attend all meetings of local authorities practically on sufferance. The decision, I understand, really goes a great deal further than that, because it lays down not only that the Press attend meetings of local authorities on sufferance, but that individual members of the Press also attend such meetings on sufferance. That is to say that if a representative of a particular paper or the particular representative of a paper is in any way objectionable to the majority of the local authority, it is within their power absolutely to exclude him. Obviously the particular reporter or newspaper which the majority would object to most would be the reporter or newspaper representing the views of the minority; and therefore, if this recent decision were carried to its logical conclusion, it would be in the power of every local authority to get rid of its most active critic, and, in fact, absolutely to silence all criticism reaching the eyes and ears of the public.

I submit to your Lordships that it is not at all desirable that such a state of things should be allowed to continue, and that it is in the public interest that publicity should be secured in all cases without question. There are legislative precedents for a proposal such as this, though the most important precedent that I am able to quote goes a great deal further than we desire to go in the present Bill. In Ireland, by Clause 15 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1902, it is absolutely impossible to exclude representatives of the Press without the assent of the Local Government Board. No resolution of any council or board to exclude from its meetings the representatives of the Press is valid without the sanction of the Local Government Board. We do not suggest anything so drastic in this Bill. There is another indirect legislative precedent which, I think, should be quoted. I am informed that the Law of Libel (Amendment) Act, 1888, provides that a fair and accurate report published in any newspaper of the proceedings of a local authority shall be privileged unless actual malice is proved. I think, therefore, it was undoubtedly in the mind of the Legislature that the meetings of local authorities should be open to the public.

But I do not desire to recommend this Bill to your Lordships' acceptance solely on the ground of narrow legislative precedents. I claim rather that it is obviously wise that publicity should obtain at all meetings of local authorities. Their duties are being increased every day, and public interest in their doings is at the same time also extending. They control vast expenditure, almost as large as, if not greater than, that which Parliament itself controls. For one hundred years Parliament has insisted on the publicity of its proceedings, and I think he would be a very bold Leader of your Lordships' House or of the other House who would suggest that one of the Houses of Parliament should sit *in camera*. It is practically established now, by custom, that the proceedings of Parliament are public, and I see no reason why a similar provision should not be extended to local parliaments. That is really the case for the Bill.

The Bill, as I say, does nothing more than establish what everybody believed to be the law until very recently, and, what I believe is absolutely desirable in the public interest. I stated just now that the Bill does not go as far as the Irish precedent which I quoted, and a perusal of the first clause of the Bill will show that this is so.

Clause 1 states that—

> "Representatives of the Press shall be admitted to the meetings of every local authority."

But it gives power to a local authority to exclude temporarily such representatives from the meeting when, in the opinion of a majority of the members, it is desirable to do so in view of the special nature of the business. Your Lordships will have noticed that in Ireland we are unable to exclude the Press without going to the Local Government Board. Under the provisions of this Bill, which applies to England, Scotland, and Wales, it will be possible to exclude representatives of the Press whenever, in the opinion of a majority of the members of the local authority, it is desirable to do so in view of the particular business to be discussed. The Bill, as originally drawn, provided that it should be necessary to have a majority of two-thirds of the members present at the meeting in order to put this power in force; but the representatives of the County Councils Association and the Municipal Corporations Association desired that this should be reduced to a bare majority, and the promoters of the Bill met that suggestion. I am informed that this was the only suggestion for an amendment of the Bill that was made by those authorities during its passage through the House of Commons.

The second subsection of Clause 1 enacts that any local authority may make regulations as to the accommodation to be provided for representatives of the Press, and the manner in which the same is to be allotted. The reason for that, I think, is to meet particularly the case of the London County Council. It is felt that the London County Council may not have accommodation for all the representatives of the Press who may desire to attend, and therefore power is given to make regulations in order to deal with the accommodation in the hands of the council. Words are inserted at the end of the subsection to the effect that the representatives of a particular newspaper are not to be excluded because of its opinions, or on the ground of any reports or comments published by such newspaper or through the agency of such representatives, this provision being necessary in view of what happened in the Tenby case. It is obviously a fair safeguard that there should be an appeal on the part of any newspaper that feels aggrieved as the result of any procedure under these regulations, and that power of appeal is given in subsection (3) of Clause 1. Subsection (4) is consequential.

Clause 2 deals with definitions. I would characterise them generally by saying that their principle is that all authorities which have spending powers are brought within the provisions of the Bill. There is one exception—Education Committees. I think your Lordships will agree that since the Act of 1902 the Education Committee is in a very special position. Clause 3 saves committee meetings. Committee meetings are in no way interfered with. They will continue, as now, closed to the public, but there is nothing to prevent them sitting in public if they desire to do so. The fifth clause contains the application of the Bill to Scotland, and Clause 6 exempts it from extending to Ireland, where, as I have informed your Lordships, more stringent provisions are already in force. I believe the Bill to be necessary in the public interest, and I trust your Lordships will be willing to read it a Second Time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

*LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, I merely rise to intimate that His Majesty's Government support this Bill. I do not think it is necessary that I should say anything further, as the noble Earl has gone fully through the various Clauses and explained them to your Lordships as far as explanation was necessary. I quite agree with all that has been said by the noble Earl, and I have to state, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, that they are of opinion that publicity should be given to all local affairs. Increased public interest is now taken in the work of the local authorities, and it is only fair that full reports of the meetings of those authorities should be available to the ratepayers and those who are concerned with the administration of local business. This Bill was originally introduced, as Lord Donoughmore has explained, in consequence of a decision of the Courts in the case of the Tenby Corporation and Mason, and, at the instance of the Local Government Board, who have looked very carefully into the Bill, it has been amended in Committee in another place in several particulars. The Local Government Board desire to support the Bill as amended.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I am not acquainted with the history of this Bill in another place, and I merely take it as it is presented to your Lordships. It is a Bill to provide for the admission of representatives of the Press to the meetings of all local authorities, and it gives the Press practically an absolute right to be present at every meeting of a local authority which has spending powers, to adopt the short description given by the noble Earl in moving the Bill. We are all in favour of publicity; but has there been any want of publicity hitherto? We are all in favour of publicity being given, for instance, to the proceedings of this House, but I am not aware of any law giving the Press the right to come here.

The third subsection of Clause 1 provides that if any representative of the Press feels aggrieved by the accommodation provided for him he may appeal to the Local Government Board. Take the case of the official reporter in your Lordships' House. If he represented the Press and were to object to his accommodation, is he to have a right to appeal to the Local Government Board to find for him a seat which will suit his convenience better than that which is provided for him by this House? Surely, in a matter of this sort we may trust the local authorities. I am sure your Lordships will be of opinion that legislation is not only undesirable, but absolutely harmful, unless it is necessary. Now, where is the necessity for this Bill? The noble Lord has indicated none. It seems that in some particular case the representative of a particular paper was excluded. He went to law, and found that he had no absolute right to be present. We do not know all the circumstances under which this gentleman may have been excluded. But why are we to assume that in this particular case the local authority was wrong and the representative of the Press in the right? Why should we make a law saying that in all circumstances this gentleman or any representative of the Press is to have a right to be present?

The Bill, in the first subsection of Clause 1, provides that—

> "Representatives of the Press shall be admitted to the meetings of every local authority."

In the first place, who are the Press? The fourth subsection of Clause 1 states that—

> "On receiving a written request from the Editor or the local representative of any newspaper, the clerk or other responsible officer shall send due notice of the meetings of the local authority to the office of such newspaper or to such local representative."

Therefore, I suppose that by the Press the Bill means any representative of any newspaper whatsoever. There is nothing to define who the Press are. I do not see that any special necessity has been proved why a representative of the Press should have a law made in his favour any more than other members of the public. According to subsection (1) representatives of the Press are to be admitted to the meetings of every local authority, but, on the other hand, the local authority is empowered to—

> "temporarily exclude such representatives."

What does "temporarily" mean? Whenever they choose, I suppose. If that be so, the proviso contradicts the beginning of the clause.

When you come to subsection (2) you find that any local authority may make regulations as to the accommodation to be provided for representatives of the Press. I apprehend that that means that they are to make regulations for accommodating the Press.

Then it is provided, as I have said, that—

> "If any representative of the Press feels aggrieved by any such regulations made as aforesaid, he may appeal to the Local Government Board, and the Board may order such local authority as aforesaid to vary or alter such regulations . . ."

Has not the Local Government Board enough to do as it is without going into these small matters? The provision which I have read, that on receiving a written request from the editor or local representative of any newspaper the clerk or other responsible officer shall send due notice of meetings of the local authority, means that if anybody starts a newspaper—it does not matter what circulation it has, or whether it has any circulation—he has merely to write to the clerk of the authority, and this official is required by the Bill to send due notice to all the meetings of the local authority.

I venture to submit that the Bill has not been thoroughly considered. I suppose it is a private Member's Bill, though I was very sorry to hear my noble friend opposite say that the Government approved of it. My attention was not directed to the Bill until it was too late to give notice of an Amendment on the Second Reading; but, if your Lordships support me, I shall move the adjournment of the debate with the intention, when it is resumed, of moving that the Bill be read a second time this day three months.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, as the noble Earl in his opening remarks referred to the County Councils Association, I think it would be as well that I should explain exactly what their position is with regard to this Bill. As far as my own view and that of the Association are concerned, the Bill is wholly unnecessary. Every county council, I believe, admits the Press under proper regulations, and has the power which this Bill properly gives of excluding the Press when there is any matter to be discussed which it is not desirable should be published in the newspapers. That being the case the County Councils Association took the view that, as long as the provisions of the Bill were brought into conformity with the present practice of the county councils, they would not oppose it. As my noble friend Lord Donoughmore said, the first clause of the Bill was altered in conformity with amendments moved on behalf of the County Councils Association. We thought that a county council should have power to exclude the Press by an ordinary vote, and that it was absurd to bring in a two-thirds majority on a matter of this kind.

There is one provision in the Bill of which we do not approve—that contained in subsection (3) of Clause 1, which says that if any representative of the Press feels aggrieved by the regulations which are made by a county council for the accommodation of the Press he may appeal to the Local Government Board. That, I think, is wholly unnecessary, and certainly the words that succeed that provision are wholly unsuitable. The local authority are not to be consulted and asked their views; but the Local Government Board may—

> "Order such local authority as aforesaid to vary or alter such regulations in such a manner as they may think fit, and no regulations in so far as they are so varied or altered shall be subsequently varied or rescinded by the local authority without the consent of the Board."

Is it not a little too much in the direction of centralisation for the Local Government Board to step in and tell a county council or a small authority at the other end of England what arrangements they should make for the accommodation of the Press? The Board cannot know the accommodation available in the place of meeting, and if it is going to busy itself with these small details, it will soon overburden itself. If the Bill receives a Second Reading I shall move, either that the subsection be left out altogether, or that it be considerably amended.

It seems also rather strong that the clerk of the county council should be ordered by statute to send notices of all meetings to any newspaper anywhere in the kingdom who chooses to apply for them. It would be impossible for that subsection to be carried out if an attempt were made to enforce it unreasonably. As far as I know this is the first time that there has been a differentiation between the Press and the public. Hitherto if the public were excluded the Press went out with them, and it is a new departure to legislate specially for the Press and to exclude all reference to the public. I do not wish to oppose the Bill, but I certainly shall oppose it if subsection (3) is retained.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, this Bill may ultimately have the beneficial effects which my noble friend hopes, but, as far as I am concerned, I fail to see that it will make any practical change. The object of the Bill is presumably to force on a recalcitrant local authority the presence of any gentleman representing the Press who wishes to attend the meetings; but in subsection (1) it is provided that any local authority may temporarily exclude any such representative if it considers it advisable in the public interest. Surely it follows that any local authority which objected to the presence of reporters would inevitably contend that it was contrary to the public interest that they should be present. Therefore how do you improve the position by passing the Bill in its present form?

*LORD HAVERSHAM: My Lords, I only rise to emphasise the point which was so well put by Lord Camperdown and Lord Belper with regard to subsection (4) of Clause 1. I think the noble Earl in charge of the Bill will see that it is impossible that the House should deliberately put on the clerks to the local authorities the enormous duty of supplying newspapers with notices of meetings. Not merely are the meetings of the authority referred to, but also those of the committees to be sent to the newspapers, and I think we ought to hesitate before placing such a duty upon these officials in this light manner. Personally I cannot see what the object of the Bill is. I have been a member of a local board in London, and there has never been any question of the Press being admitted. I see no rational reason for the Bill, but I see many reasons why we should change subsection (4) and other subsections.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: My Lords, I think it will be quite clear to my noble friend in charge of the Bill that a good many points will have to be considered if the House should decide to go into Committee on the Bill. As far as my own opinion is concerned, I think the Bill is right in principle, because there has been a legal decision that the Press are not entitled to admission, and I think there is every reason for due publicity of the proceedings of local bodies such as are named in the Bill.

But, on the other hand, while the Bill takes very good care to provide for that, it does nothing whatever to provide for what I am afraid is very possible—misconduct on the part of the Press. Your Lordships have heard, and some may have had experience, of cases in which representatives of the Press have asked for an interview, and on being denied an interview have promptly proceeded to invent one for the benefit of their newspaper. I can recall several cases during the time I was responsible for Irish administration in which meetings which had never taken place at all were reported at full length. I am afraid that in these days of what is called newspaper enterprise we must consider that some newspapers, at all events, may be capable of abusing the privilege granted to them.

What is the position in such a case that this Bill would establish? Under subsection (2) of Clause 1—

> "No . . . . regulations shall enable . . . . local authorities to exclude the representatives of any newspaper on the ground of its opinions, or on the ground of any reports or comments published by such newspaper or through the agency of such representatives."

I should be very sorry to exclude any representative on the ground of the opinions of his paper or of its comments on the proceedings of the local authority; but if a newspaper deliberately reports the proceedings falsely or publishes documents that should be confidential, there ought to be some punishment in the form of the exclusion of such representative in the future. I hope that His Majesty's Government, who support the principle of the Bill, will be prepared to deal with that point in Committee if the Bill proceeds.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I hope the House will agree to read the Bill a second time. I quite admit that there may be points that will require careful consideration in Committee. As regards what Lord Newton said as to the object of the Bill being nullified by the provision in subsection 1 of Clause 1 in regard to temporary exclusion, I think if the noble Lord will look at that again he will see that it has to be rather a solemn and formal performance in respect of a particular subject, and it would be impossible to suppose that under that all representatives of the Press could be permanently and every day excluded from the meetings of the local authority. I think the real necessity for the measure consists in the fact of the recent legal decision. It is a very serious matter that it should be laid down by the Courts of Law that all the proceedings of all local bodies can, if so desired, be carried on *in camera*; and on that ground we certainly support the principle of the Bill. As to the provision relating to the issue of notices, that might very properly, in my opinion, be submitted to some consideration. It seems to me to be rather loosely drawn, and I have no doubt that the noble Earl opposite will consider that point. So far as the county councils are concerned, I very much doubt whether any measure of this kind is necessary at all, but there are far more numerous local authorities where I can understand that some difficulty might arise.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: My Lords, I hope we shall not be misled by the continuous repetition of the necessity for publicity. What do we mean by publicity? Lord St. Aldwyn has told us that the admission of the Press very often leads to misrepresentation. Is misrepresentation publicity? If you want to secure publicity by law, then you must have official reporters who are responsible to some authority. It is no use admitting the Press; everybody knows perfectly well the result of that where local authorities are concerned. Discussions by local authorities are not generally of wide interest, and the result is that they are very sparsely reported unless somebody forgets himself and says something that he ought not to say. That never happens in county councils, but sometimes in municipal borough councils one of the hon. members calls another hon. member a liar and there is a row. That is reported at the greatest length, and that is the value of publicity. I think that it is a most monstrous thing that we should be asked in this country for the first time—we are told that it is so in Ireland, but Ireland is not, I hope, a precedent for us in this country in all things—to give the Press legal recognition and authority to be present at all meetings. I entirely agree with what was said by Lord Belper. If you wish to do this at all, do it by insisting that the public should be admitted. This is the first time, as far as I know, that it has been proposed to give the Press a legal standing in this country. The Bill goes very much further than some noble Lords seem to think; it establishes a very dangerous principle and is a measure that is not required. I do not know whether my noble friend Lord Camperdown intends to press his Amendment, but I hope that, at any rate, it will be open to us, if we please, to take the opinion of the House on going into Committee, if we do not take it at an earlier stage.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN. In the circumstances I think it would be more convenient if I did not press my Motion; but, of course, it will be quite competent for me, or for any other Peer, to take such course as may seem desirable with regard to this Bill at a later stage.

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday the 21st instant.

The Duke of Northumberland.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS (MASTERS) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3^a on Tuesday next.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION BILL [H.L.].

Amendment reported (according to order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Will your Lordships allow me to make three further Amendments in Clause 2 of this Bill? They do not introduce anything new, but it has been pointed out to me by an eminent Colonial authority that doubt might arise as to the way in which the provision in the Bill should be carried out. The object of the Amendments is to secure that certain Judges of Courts in British Possessions may act as assessors of the Judicial Committee if they are Privy Councillors and if His Majesty in Council so directs, but that their number shall not exceed two at any one time. This is merely a Departmental matter; and I hope your Lordships will agree to the Amendments.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 19, after the word 'shall,' to insert the words 'if His Majesty so directs.'"—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, lines 22 and 23, to leave out the words 'the Judicial Committee Amendment Act, 1895, and this Act,' and to insert the words 'this section.'"—*The Lord Chancellor.*

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 23, to leave out the word 'seven,' and to insert the word 'two,' and to leave out from the word 'time' to the end of the subsection.'"—*The Lord Chancellor.*

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3^a on Monday next, and to be printed as amended. (No. 134.)

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, this Bill has been introduced by the Government to enable markets to be established in rural districts by rural district councils. It is a very short Bill, and I do not think it requires very much explanation. It has been brought in to a large extent in consequence of representations which have been repeatedly made to the Local Government Board by the Board of Agriculture and others interested in the agricultural districts.

Under Clause 166 of the Public Health Act of 1875 town councils and urban district councils are given power to provide a market place, construct a market house, acquire land and levy tolls for carrying on the market in their area. The town council can only do that by a vote of two-thirds of their number, and the urban district council must get the consent of the owners and ratepayers of the district before the market can be instituted. Rural district councils, however, have no direct powers for providing and carrying on markets, although Section 276 of the Public Health Act enables the Local Government Board to invest a rural district council with all, or any, of the powers which an urban district council now enjoys. The Board, however, have been advised that the provisions of Section 166 as they stand cannot be applied to rural districts.

The proposal in the Bill to meet this difficulty is to enable rural district councils, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to exercise the same powers as are exercisable by an urban district council with the consent of the owners and ratepayers. The reason for substituting the consent of the Local Government Board for that of the owners and ratepayers, to which, I believe, some exception was taken in another place, is that the consent of the owners and ratepayers cannot be conveniently obtained in a rural district. The methods of procedure prescribed in the Public Health Act to obtain this result are quite unsuitable to apply to a rural district, which is often of very wide extent. It is highly desirable that properly constructed markets should be established in rural districts. At present in many instances live stock markets are held on a portion of the public highway, and this practice is very often objectionable, not merely on sanitary grounds, but also from the point of view of the well-being of the animals offered for sale.

Rural district councils are, under their present limited powers, unable to spend money on paving places where it has been the custom to hold markets, and on keeping them clean and in a sanitary condition. It is to remove all these difficulties that this Bill has been introduced. The owners and ratepayers will be fully protected under this procedure, because if there was any doubt as to the opinion of a locality the Local Government Board would, of course, hold a local inquiry before giving its consent. Some objection has been taken to the additional cost which will be thrown upon local authorities, but I do not think the expense will be at all large and will be justified on the grounds of public health. I hope your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Allendale.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, this is a non-controversial measure dealing with police pensions, which has come up from another place. I understand that the Government have no objection to it, and I hope, therefore, the House will allow it to be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Newton.*)

THE LORD STEWARD (Earl BEAUCHAMP): My Lords, I have only to say, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, that they offer no opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill. The Home Office are still of opinion that their original proposal was the best, but as this is a compromise they will do nothing to prevent the passing of this Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1903.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government the number of persons not previously possessed of land (other than evicted tenants or persons representing evicted tenants), to whom land has been given by the Estates Commissioners purporting to act under Section 2 of the Irish Land Act, 1903. The question of Ireland was before your Lordships both yesterday and the day before, and I shall, therefore, confine my remarks within the briefest possible space, although I think this subject is one not undeserving of your Lordships' attention.

I need hardly say that I do not propose to call in question the action of the Estates Commissioners in granting land under subsection (*b*) of Section 2 of the Land Act of 1903. They are expressly given power to do so, and I believe one argument that was brought forward in favour of the provision was that it might tend to stem the tide of emigration of able-bodied young men from Ireland. I quite agree that this is very desirable, but it was not the main object of the Act of 1903. As I understand it, that Act was passed for two special purposes—first, to enable the tenant to purchase the land he tilled, and I lay emphasis on the phrase "land he tilled;" and, secondly, to enable tenants who had very small holdings but were industrious and possessed of certain means, to have their holdings increased by the addition of a certain amount of grass land in their neighbourhood. This second object is one which has to a great extent caught the public mind. The ears of the public have been taken with the phrases "relief of congestion," and "economic holdings," without, perhaps, their clearly understanding exactly what those terms mean; and the Report which has just been issued by the Royal Commission on Congestion, presided over by Lord Dudley, makes drastic suggestions as to the means by which these matters can be carried out. So far as I can make out, they recommend that the West of Ireland, at least, should be made a second Servia, a peasant State consisting of ten-pound holdings; and that there should be some oases of trees where landlords will be allowed to remain in their parks shut off from the political or economic life of the nation. Perhaps I may be allowed to read to your Lordships what the Dudley Commission say in their Report as to the sufficiency of land to be given both to the sons of tenants and also to relieve congestion. In paragraph 123 the Commissioners say—

> "Every holding given to the son of a tenant or to any other person not at present a land holder will to that extent perpetuate congestion in the West."

And, again, in paragraph 126—

> "We think it is our duty to state very definitely that such a utilisation of the grass lands of the West of Ireland is incompatible with the relief of congestion."

Whatever we think about the land question in Ireland, we all agree that it is very desirable it should be settled, and that nothing should be done which would tend in any way to accentuate the difficulties in accomplishing that settlement. If land is given, under Section 2, to the sons of tenants, it will not be very long before that son finds some Bridget to share it with him, with the result that perhaps within thirty years you will have five or six other able-bodied landless men claiming that you should do the same for them as you did for their father. I believe that one job ought to be completed before we begin another. Consequently I am averse to any action which may lessen the amount of land available for the relief of congestion. I should like to again quote from the Report of the Dudley Commission ——

***THE EARL OF CREWE:** I am extremely unwilling to interrupt the noble Lord, but I desire to call attention to what I think is something of an abuse in the form in which Notices are put on the Paper. The noble Lord is really calling attention to the Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland. That is an extremely natural and legitimate thing to do, but I wish to draw his attention to the fact that if he desired to do that he should have put his Motion in that form, and not merely have asked the simple Question standing in his name on the Paper.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE: I am sorry if I have infringed the rule, and I will endeavour to confine myself more closely to the question. To return, then, to this special subsection. I know that it was framed with the best intentions, but I am sorry to say that in my opinion it was one of the greatest mistakes in the Act of 1903. I believe it has had more to do with the unfortunate state of affairs which has existed during the last eighteen months in Ireland than, perhaps, anything else, with the exception, of course, of the action—or what I shall, perhaps, more correctly describe as inaction—of the Chief Secretary. Small tenants and their sons knew of this provision in the Act, and it was only natural that they should wish to take advantage of it. The result is that strong local opposition has been raised to the migration of tenants from other parts of Ireland to the grass lands in the immediate neighbourhood where these tenants with their sons are living; and, in the fear that such lands might be taken for the relief of congestion elsewhere, these young men have, I am afraid, had recourse to very reprehensible measures. In the hope of obtaining the land as soon as possible they have resorted to the practice of cattle-driving, which has reached such a state of perfection, I will not say under the auspices, but under the rule of His Majesty's Government. They have done this in the hope of compelling the graziers to give up their farms and the landlords to sell, so that the land might be divided among the landless men in the neighbourhood, and the effect will be to accentuate the difficulties of relieving congestion elsewhere. I beg to ask the Question standing in my name.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, in answer to the Question on the Paper, I have to say that up to 31st March last the Estates Commissioners had provided (under Section 2 of the Irish Land Act, 1903, as amended by Section 19 of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906) parcels of untenanted land for 137 persons, who were either sons of tenants or labourers. The answer to the supplementary Question is that the Commissioners had allotted, under Section 2, 70,326 acres of untenanted land altogether among 2,647 persons, and of these all but the 137 mentioned had previously been in possession of land. The average size of the "parcel" of land so allotted was, in the case of sons of tenants and labourers, thirty-five acres per man. Having regard to the very large number of advances made by the Commissioners for the purchase of "parcels" under Section 2, it cannot be said that the Commissioners have unduly exercised their powers by allotting 137 holdings to persons who had not already been in possession of land.

THE EARL OF MAYO: Sons of tenants are, I admit, in the Act. Can the noble Lord say how many of the 137 were labourers?

LORD DENMAN: I shall be obliged if the noble Earl will give me notice of that Question. I cannot give the exact figure, but the number is very small.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 9th July, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords] (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill.—Reported, with

Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Leeds Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for conferring further powers on the Rhymney and Aber Gas and Water Company." [Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords].

Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Walsall, against; to lie upon the Table.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL.

Petition from Walsall, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Hinckley, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR-LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Stranraer, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRANSVAAL.

Copy presented, of Papers relating to the form of Contract in use in connection with the recruitment of Native Labourers for the Transvaal Mines in Portuguese East Africa [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DEER FORESTS (HIGHLAND CROFTING COUNTIES).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 9th March; *Mr. Weir*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 220.]

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Regulations for Technical Schools, Schools of Art and other forms of provision of further Education in England and Wales (from 1st August, 1908, to 31st July, 1909) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MINT.

Copy presented, of Thirty-eighth Annual Report of the Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Mint, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Inquiry into Charities (County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 26th July, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 221.]

Inquiry into Charities (County of Berks).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 28th March, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*]; to be printed. [No. 222.]

OFFENCES (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "showing respectively for each month, January to June inclusive, the number of cattle-drives, of cases of firing into houses and at persons of boycotting (complete and partial), of prosecutions for foregoing offences, of results of prosecutions, of claims for malicious injuries, amount of awards, number of appeals against awards, etc. in the form set out as under —

Month, 1908.	Cattle-Drive.	Firing into Houses and at Persons.	Boycotting.		Number of Prosecutions for foregoing Offences.	Result of Prosecutions.			Number of Claims for Malicious Injuries.		Amount of Awards.	Number of Appeals against Awards.	Remarks.
			Complete.	Partial.		Number of Convictions.	Number of Dismissals.	Number bound to keep the peace, &c.	Granted.	Refused.	£		
January - -													
February- -													
March - -													
April - -													
May - -													
June - -													
Totals -													

Mr. Lonsdale.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Development Grant—Revised Estimate.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the reason for the alterations contained in the revised Estimate for the Ireland Development Grant.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) In the Estimate for the Ireland Development Grant which was prepared early in December last, the estimated balance to the credit of the account on 1st April, 1908, was shown to be £91,538. In May last, when the account for the year ending 31st March, 1908, was made up, it was found that the actual balance in hand was but £51,135. The difference arose mainly from the fact that in the last quarter of the financial year claims amounting to £37,031 were received from the Commissioners of National Education on account of training colleges under private management and salaries of assistant teachers in national schools which have not been taken into account in estimating the balance in December. It therefore became necessary to prepare a revised estimate for the current year showing proposed expenditure at the reduced total of £236,477. The subheads of the Estimate in which a reduction has been made are as follows: Subhead C. (National School Buildings).—£25,000 being an instalment of a grant of £70,000, reduced to £5,000, on the understanding that the balance of the £70,000 will be made available in future years, and that the unexpended balance of £35,455 on Vote 14, Class I., for 1907–1908, will be available to meet expenditure on school buildings in the current year. Subhead H. (Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway). —It is doubtful whether the promoters of this Railway will be in a position to make good their claim to any portion of the promised grant. Provision is made for £2,318 instead of £23,950. Subhead K. (Arklow Harbour).—Grant reduced from £10,362 to £8,000, the latter sum being now considered sufficient to meet expenditure during the year. In the case of two of the subheads, the provision has been somewhat increased, as compared with the first estimate, namely: Subhead B. (Marlborough Street Training College).—Grant increased from £2,792 to £4,277, the latter being the actual balance unexpended of the total grant of £50,000. Subhead L. (Wicklow Harbour).—Grant increased from £1,536 to £3,822, the latter being the actual balance of the complete grant. The work is approaching completion.

County Court Fees.

Sir GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the committee now sitting to deal with the question of imprisonment for debt can be given powers to consider the fees now charged to litigants in County Courts.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have considered this question and consulted the Treasury, but I am afraid that the proposed extension of the reference would not be practicable. The subject is one quite foreign to that of the committee's inquiry.

Small Holdings—Guarantees for Rent.

Mr. RENDALL (Gloucestershire, Thornbury): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board is aware that the town clerk has been directed by the Bristol small holdings committee to demand from an applicant for a small holding of five acres a responsible person to guarantee the rent, in spite of the fact that the applicant has satisfactory evidence that he has paid a rent of £26 yearly for a considerable time; and whether the Board will take such action in this and similar cases as will prevent the purpose of the Small Holdings Act being defeated.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board are informed that an application for a small holding of four to five acres with a cottage and shed has been made to the Bristol Town Council which is now under consideration. The applicant describes himself as a labourer without capital, and it will be necessary for the small holdings committee of the council to satisfy themselves that he would be a suitable tenant if a holding is provided, but they have not stipulated that any guarantee for the payment of the rent should be given.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Mrs. Cummins.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the case of Mrs. Cummins, evicted tenant on the Atkins Estate, Pencil Hill, Mallow, County Cork; and, if so, what steps are being taken towards the reinstatement of this evicted tenant in her former holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are inquiring into the case of Mrs. Cummins with a view to considering the question of providing her with holding on any untenanted land that they may acquire.

Holding for Mr. Morris on the Wilkinson Estate.

Mr. SHEEHY (Meath, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have purchased an evicted farm, formerly held by Mr. Morris, on the Wilkinson property, in the County Meath, and given it to an evicted tenant, Mr. Morris having got an equivalent holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Answer is in the affirmative. The Estates Commissioners had already provided Frederick Morris, the evicted tenant, with another holding at the time when they purchased the estate upon which his former holding is situate.

Prosecutions for Walking with Cycles without Lights.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received any representations from Ireland as to vexatious prosecutions against persons found walking with their bicycles after dark; whether he is aware that several such prosecutions leading to convictions have taken place at Roscrea, County Tipperary, recently; and if he will take any steps to prevent a repetition of such cases.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer to my Answer to the Question put by the hon. Member for the Ramsey division on 26th May, from which it will be seen that, under a strict interpretation of the law applying to Ireland, a bicycle which is upon a public road at night requires to be lighted whether it is being ridden or not. I am informed that some prosecutions for wheeling unlighted bicycles at night have taken place at Roscrea, but it is not intended to institute such prosecutions in future unless the police are satisfied that more than a mere technical breach of the law has occurred.

Preservation of Rate Books of Irish Poor Law Unions.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will take steps to secure the preservation in the Irish Record Office of the rate books of the various Irish Poor Law unions as also the Tithe Applotment records, and the records of the Census Returns from 1881.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The rate books of Irish Poor Law unions are the property of the local authorities and are not under my control. The Tithe Applotment books, which are stored in the strong room of the Land Commission, are used in connection both with the recovery of tithe rent-charge and also with land purchase proceedings. They are open to public inspection. The records from which recent Census Returns were prepared are in the custody of the Registrar-General, and being confidential documents they cannot in any way be made available to the public. The facts relating to the census, so far as they are of public interest, are embodied in the public Census Returns. In the circumstances it does not seem that any of the documents mentioned can be placed in the Irish Record Office.

Increased Salaries for Irish Workhouse Teachers.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if Irish workhouse teachers will be allowed to share in the grant for the increase of the salaries of Irish National school teachers.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The reply is in the negative. No charge in respect of the teachers of Poor Law union schools has ever been borne on the Vote for public education. Such teachers are in the service of the boards of guardians and are paid out of the local rates.

Irish Education Grants and Assistant Teachers.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.); To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will take steps to insure that assistants in National schools are equitably dealt with in the new distribution of the supplementary grant for primary education in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The position of assistant teachers will receive full consideration in dealing with the allocation of the supplementary grant in question.

Dublin Police Court Clerks.

MR. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether any changes in the Regulations governing the appointment of second-class clerks in the Dublin Metropolitan Police Courts have been made; and, if so, when such changes were made, and what is the nature of them; and if he will state when the next examination, if any, for second-class clerks in the Dublin Metropolitan Courts is likely to be held.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) No change in the Regulations has been made for several years past. No vacancy for a second-class clerk exists or is imminent, and it is impossible to say when a vacancy is likely to arise.

Ballingarry Evicted Tenant.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the

Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Estates Commissioners in the month of April last referred the case of Denis Cronin, of Ballingarry, in the county of Limerick, representative of his mother, Catherine Cronin, deceased, evicted tenant, to one of their inspectors with the object of providing him with a suitable holding in lieu of the evicted farm; whether he is aware that Cronin has not yet got the holding; and will he press on the Commissioners the necessity and desirability of acquiring such a holding without delay as a provision for this young man.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have already referred this case to one of their inspectors for consideration in connection with the allotment of untenanted land which the Commissioners have acquired, or for the purchase of which they are negotiating.

Scottish Regiments in India.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he will give the stations where Scottish regiments are at present quartered in India, specifying those quarters where Presbyterian places of worship exist, and also give the names of localities where such places of worship exist in India and at which it would be possible to station such regiments.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The stations at which Scottish regiments are at present quartered in India are Bombay, Bareilly, Cawnpore, Dinapore, Calcutta, Sialkot, and Nowshera. Places of worship are available for their exclusive use at all these stations except Nowshera. My hon. friend will find a complete list of the localities where churches available for Presbyterian worship exist at page 20 of the Papers [Cd. 4022] recently presented to Parliament.

Arbitration on Trade Disputes in New Zealand.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the dissatisfaction existing amongst the workers of New Zealand in connection with the operation of the Arbitration Act, and whether he would consider the avisability of issuing a short Report on the subject for the information of workers and others interested in the matter in this country.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) My hon. friend will find that the matter is dealt with in Mr. Ave's Report on the Wages Boards and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts of Australia and New Zealand, which will be published in a few day's time.

Australian Commonwealth and the Navy.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the naval arrange ments have been concluded between His Majesty's Government and the Commonwealth of Australia; and if he can state what has been the delay in bringing the matter to a close.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Answer to the Question is in the negative. I can only refer the hon. Member to the reply given in his previous Question on 21st May. As then stated, the subject is an exceedingly complex one, and the scheme put forward by the Australian Government requires much amplification before it can be fully considered from the point of view of its possible adoption as an alternative to the present naval agreement.

American Gooseberry Mildew.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in view of the fact that American gooseberry mildew has broken out afresh, in the infectious condition known as the summer stage, in sixty-eight plantations in which all the requirements of the Board of Agriculture and its inspectors have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Board, the Board will now have recourse to more drastic measures to stamp out this pest, in accordance with the promise made by the President to the deputation of fruit growers on 8th April.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The experience gained in dealing with gooseberry mildew this year goes to show that it will not be desirable, at any rate at present, to alter the Order now in operation.

Flax Growing in Ireland.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he is aware that there is a decrease of 16¼ per cent. in the flax-growing area in Ireland this year as compared with 1907; whether he could give any reason for this decrease; and if he could state in what particular districts the decrease was greatest.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The Department understand from reports received that the acreage under flax in Ireland this year is less than in 1907. As the agricultural statistics for 1908 are not yet available, it is not possible at present to state the extent of the decrease in acreage nor the districts in which the decrease is most marked. Th decrease reported is, in the view of the Department, mainly due to the following circumstances: (1) In some districts the 1907 crop gave a lower yield and was of poorer quality than usual; (2) owing to the depression in the linen trade smaller prices were realised by the growers for scutched flax of the 1907 crop.

Temperance Meetings in Regent's Park.

Sir W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that for the last six years the police have permitted temperance meetings to be held on Sunday mornings at the top of Park Street, Regent's Park, and that police permission has during the past month been asked for and refused for a continuance of such meetings, and whether, if on inquiry into the cause of such refusal he finds that no legitimate ground of complaint exists, he will cause the permission to be renewed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The permission of the police is not required for the holding of temperance meetings at the top of Park Street, Regent's Park, or elsewhere, and they would not intervene unless obstruction or annoyance were caused. Police action in this instance has been limited to ceasing the issue of permits authorising the collecting of money at this spot, in consequence of complaints from residents. Discretion to grant or refuse permits for the collection of money is vested in the Commissioner, and I am not prepared to interfere with his exercise of that discretion.

Territorials and Vaccination.

Sir FRANCIS LOWE (Birmingham, Edgbaston): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether members of the Territorial Forces, who may have a conscientious objection to vaccination, will be entited, in case of their desiring to enlist in the Regular Forces, to have their conscientious objection respected.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There is no intention of waiving the regulation regarding vaccination in the Regular Forces in favour of members of the Territorial Force desirous of enlisting into the Regular Forces.

Purchase of Lands by the War Office.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Secretary of State for War what are the items of £1,000 and upwards composing the sum of £38,340 to be voted under Vote 10, Subhead P., for purchase of land for military services.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It would be contrary to the public interest to give particulars of the several purchases contemplated; but when the purchases have been effected details of the expenditure will be furnished as usual in the Appropriation Account.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Unemployment in Sheffield.

Mr. WALTERS (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the lack of employment in the East End of Sheffield amongst workmen chiefly dependent upon Admiralty orders, he will expedite the distribution of contracts for his Department.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.): The amount of money the Admiralty can spend is limited by the amounts that Parliament sanctions. The Admiralty could not expedite the placing of contracts and the consequent greater expenditure of money during the financial year, without coming to the House for a Supplementary Vote.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): In view of the exceptional distress in Sheffield cannot the hon. Gentleman bring in a Supplementary Estimate, especially as as a large Naval programme may have to be undertaken next year?

DR. MACNAMARA: Not as I am at present advised.

MR. WALTERS: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the men employed on this work are specially trained; that it is work of a highly specialised character, and if the men are thrown out in the winter and scattered all over the country, difficulty may be experienced in getting enough together again?

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): Surely Woolwich would be equal to the occasion.

[No Answer was returned.]

Pembroke Dockyard.

MR. OWEN PHILIPPS (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if the Admiralty have sent a letter to Pembroke Dock, expressing appreciation of the fact that the first-class cruiser "Warrior," built at the Welsh dockyard, was built cheaper than any other ship of her class, and complimenting the officers and men who contributed to this creditable result.

DR. MACNAMARA: The Admiralty have sent a letter to the Captain Superintendent of Pembroke Dock, expressing their satisfaction at the saving which has been effected over the approved estimates in the construction of H.M.S. "Warrior."

MR. OWEN PHILIPPS: May I ask whether in view of the saving effected and the fact that a large Naval programme may be anticipated next year, the hon. Gentleman will see that one of the large ships is allotted to this dockyard?

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): And bear in mind that our shipbuilding is precisely the same case as our cloth manufacture?

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): Will the hon. Gentleman bear in mind the claims of the Thames yard at the East End of London?

MR. JENKINS (Chatham): Is it not the fact that this is the invariable result of building the ships in H.M. dockyards, and will the Admiralty consider the advisability of completely nationalising the building of war ships, in order that the money thus saved may go towards the old-age pension fund?

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): Does the Admiralty employ commercial travellers for the dockyards?

*DR. MACNAMARA: I can only say that all these suggestions from so many quarters will have our respectful consideration.

*MR. REES: May I ask whether the distribution of these contracts can matter if all Admiralty expenditure is, as contended by hon. Gentlemen opposite, unproductive?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is an argumentative question.

H.M.S. "Blake."

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the storehouse staff at the Chatham Dockyard that prepared the racks, bins, and shelves for the storerooms of H.M.S. "Blake" are skilled or unskilled workmen, and whether they were paid the rate of wages usually paid to workmen doing this class of work; and whether the workmen that fixed the work on board the ship were skilled or unskilled workmen.

DR. MACNAMARA: The men employed on the work referred to are rated as skilled labourers—the class of men which is usually employed on work of this character in the storehouses. Their wages are fixed at a rate of from 22s. to 28s. per week. The racks, bins and shelves were fixed on board the ship by men of the ship's company, under the carpenter of the vessel.

Dissensions in the Navy.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the present Commander of the Channel Fleet, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, is not on speaking terms with his official superior, Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Fisher. and with his official subordinate Admiral Sir Percy Scott; and, if so, whether having regard to the Regulations relating to dicipline in the Navy and the fighting efficiency of the Fleet, he will say what steps he proposes taking in the matter.

DR. MACNAMARA: The Admiralty have nothing to add to the Answer given by the Prime Minister yesterday to a Question from my hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn.

MR. H. C. LEA: Is the House to understand that the rules and regulations of the Navy on the subject of discipline and fighting efficiency in the Fleet are only to apply to the humbler ranks, stokers, for example, while Lord Charles Beresford is to be allowed to break them with impunity?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that last week Admiral Lord Charles Beresford ordered the "Good Hope" and the "Argyll" to execute a manœuvre which would have made collision inevitable and thus reproduced the disaster caused by the "Camperdown" sinking the "Victoria" in the Mediterranean, and that this was averted by the officer commanding the "Good Hope" disobeying the order, and, if so, whether a court of inquiry has been ordered to assemble; and, if a *prima facie* case has been established for an inquiry, will he, in the meantime, relieve Admiral Lord Charles Beresford of his command.

DR. MACNAMARA. The Admiralty have no information on the subject.

MR. H. C. LEA: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that two days ago *The Times* published a full description of this incident, and to-day, again, a diagram illustrating the incident; has the Admiralty, seeing the grave importance of this matter, telegraphed to Lord Charles Beresford for an explanation?

DR. MACNAMARA. I saw the statement in *The Times*, but I have to add that we have no information on the matter. The Commander-in-Chief is now on the high seas in connection with the manœuvres. I assume that a report will be forthcoming from him, if any exceptional incident arose on which he may think it necessary to report.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) Will the hon. Gentleman in considering this matter, be careful to receive with the utmost caution any charges made against Lord Charles Beresford or any other Irishman by *The Times* newspaper?

MR. MARKHAM: Are there any means of protecting distinguished naval officers from these personal attacks in this House?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the hon. Member also consider whether there is any possible way of preventing *The Times* newspaper from constantly circulating scandals of every kind?

[No Answer was returned.]

Enlistment and Rejections of Recruits.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of recruits that have applied for enlistment during the year 1907 in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Sunderland, Glasgow, Dundee, and Edinburgh, and the number of rejections in each town as being physically unfit to join the Army.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond). The number of men who offered themselves for enlistment into the Regular Army in the following towns during the twelve months ended 30th September, 1907, and the numbers of such men who were rejected for physical reasons—

Town.	Offered for Enlistment.	Rejected for Physical reasons.
London - -	20,975	8,806
Birmingham -	1,858	1,084
Manchester -	2,523	1,821
Sheffield - -	1,031	363
Leeds - -	791	452
Newcastle -	1,493	1,046
Sunderland -	776	282
Glasgow - -	2,905	1,135
Dundee - -	956	680
Edinburgh -	1,500	628

Shannon Bridge Barracks.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state when the military barracks near Shannon Bridge, in the County of Rocommon, were last occupied by military, the rent of those buildings and ground attached, and the annual upkeep; whether those buildings are used for any purpose by the Government; and, if not, whether he will take steps to avoid the expenditure which is involved in retention and preservation.

MR. ACLAND: The rent of a portion of this property is £59 11s.; the rest is freehold. The buildings are not in occupation by the Military and there is a proposal under consideration to dispose of the property.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): The hon. Gentleman has not answered the last part of the Question.

MR. ACLAND: Perhaps the hon. Member will put that down again.

Volunteer Long Service Medal.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E,): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a Volunteer who has been returned efficient for sixteen consecutive years is entitled to the Volunteer long-service medal unless he has, subsequently to 30th April last, signed on as a Member of the Territorial Army, in which case he is disqualified; and, if so, what is the reason of this disqualification, which would seem calculated to discourage men from joining the Territorial Army.

MR. ACLAND: It has been decided that Volunteers of sixteen years service who have joined the Territorial Force may have the option of being considered either for the long-service medal or the new efficiency medal.

Machine Guns.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any proportion of the Special Reserve will be trained to the thorough use and manipulation of machine guns; and what that proportion will be.

MR. ACLAND: Yes, Sir. In each battalion of the Special Reserve a detachment consisting of one officer, two non-commissioned officers, and seventeen privates will be trained in the use of machine guns.

Fife Yeomanry Camp Incident.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydfil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the circumstances attending the degradation for alleged disobedience of Private James Rennie, of the A squadron of the Fife and Forfar Imperial Yeomanry at their annual training camp at Annsmuir, Ladybank, on 27th June; whether Rennie was taken under escort to the centre of the square and informed that he had been sentenced to be drummed out of the regiment, and was thereupon deprived of his cap and had the buttons and decorations cut from his tunic, and was thereafter marched outside the camp; what was the offence for which this punishment was inflicted, and what opportunity had Rennie for defending himself; and what regulations authorise this form of punishment without trial.

MR. ACLAND: Nothing is known at the War Office of this occurrence, but inquiries are being made.

Territorial Camps.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, respectively, of the Territorial Forces remained in camp for fifteen days during the month of June.

MR. ACLAND: No returns of the attendances in camp have as yet been forwarded to the War Office.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: When will they be forwarded?

MR. ACLAND: They are not usually forwarded, but no doubt we can get them.

Durham Royal Engineers Adjutant.

MR. CURRAN (Yarrow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Durham (Fortress) Royal Engineers, Territorial Force, are to be deprived of their present adjutant and that he is to have no successor; and, if so, can he give the reason for this change.

MR. ACLAND: The officer of the coast battalion at the Tyne will carry out the duties of adjutant to these companies, as in the case of other engineer fortress units at defended ports where sections of the coast battalion are stationed. Owing to the large establishment of fortress engineers in this division temporarily retained pending the raising of local corps at other stations, it has been decided to appoint a Territorial officer as acting adjutant to the fortress units to assist the coast battalion officer.

Royal Irish Rifles.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the strength of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th battalions Royal Irish Rifles in officers, non-commissioned officers, and men on assembling for annual training this year, the number who have joined the Special Reserve, and the number who have taken their discharge from each battalion, respectively; and can he state, with regard to the total number who have joined the Special Reserve, how many have joined for one year and longer periods, respectively.

MR. ACLAND: (1) Strength of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th battalions, Royal Irish Rifles on assembling for the annual training for this year—

Royal Irish Rifle.	Officers.	Non-Commissioned Officers.	Men.	Total.
3rd Battalion.	15	40	670	725
4th ,,	22	44	600	666
5th ,,	17	41	530	588

(2) The numbers in each unit of non-commissioned officers and men who have joined the Special Reserve, and the number who have taken their discharge from each battalion respectively—

Royal Irish Rifles.	Joined Special Reserve.	Taken a free Discharge.
3rd Battalion.	342	34
4th ,,	307	109
5th ,,	448	41

(3) Periods for which men of the Militia of the Royal Irish Rifles joined the Special Reserve—

Royal Irish Rifles.	Over 1 year and under 2 years.	Over 2 years and under 3 years.	Over 3 years and under 4 years.	For 4 years.	Over 4 years and under 5 years.	Over 5 years and under 6 years.
3rd Battn.	69	86	72	48	28	39
4th ,,	46	57	52	35	80	37
5th ,,	79	91	166	30	46	36

Dr. Sven Hedin.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he has yet been able to make inquiries regarding the distinguished scientist and traveller, Dr. Sven Hedin, who was last heard of in Thibet, and with what result.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The Government of India have reported that the latest news received of Dr. Sven Hedin was in November, when he informed the local official at Leh in Kashmir by letter that he was going to winter in Khotan in Chinese Turkestan and expected to return to Leh in the course of the summer. Further inquiries are being made; the Resident in Kashmir, the special assistant at Kashgar and the trade agent at Gyantse are being asked whether they have any information.

Assaults on Europeans in India.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can give an assurance that the frequent cases of assault upon European residents throughout the Indian Empire is receiving the due attention of the authorities; and whether it is proposed that steps shall be taken to strengthen the law in dealing with similar cases.

MR. BUCHANAN: We have no official information that cases of assault on European residents in India are becoming more frequent, but the question of assaults, of whatever class, is, of course, a matter that receives the constant attention of Government, particularly at the present time. The Secretary of State sees no reason for taking steps to strengthen the existing law on the subject.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Have any steps been taken against those newspaper correspondents who spread false reports of this kind?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think that arises out of the Question.

St. Vincent Relief Fund.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshirk, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received from the Government of St. Vincent a request for the sanction of a loan, from the Government of St. Vincent relief fund, for the purpose of reopening the Carib country fresh-water canal, which was destroyed in the eruption; and, if so, what reply he has given to this request.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): The Secretary of State has sanctioned the free grant of £1,600 from the St. Vincent Eruption Fund for the purpose mentioned in the Question. As regards a loan in addition to it, it would not have been possible to make a loan from the fund without trenching on the invested portion of the Fund, which the Secretary of State has decided should be held as a reserve against the contingency of a future disaster, and should not be invested on local security. A loan has, however, been authorised from floating balances of general revenue if the Legislature are willing to pass an Ordinance for the purpose.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Is it not the fact that the floating balance of general revenue is only £5,600.?

Colonel SEELY asked for notice of the Question.

Tristan D'Acunha.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will take steps to obtain timely information from the Cape Colony authorities of ships intending to visit Tristan D'Acunha, so that mails may be made up from England and thus avoid the disappointment that occurred lately when the ship sailed from the Cape before the arrival of the mail from England.

Colonel SEELY: The attention of the Governor of the Cape will be called to this request in order that if possible it may be complied with.

A Blue-Book Libel.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has considered the petition presented by Alfred Mangena, praying for the removal of certain libellous statements regarding himself published in a Blue-book [Cd. 3027]; and whether he can inform the House what action he proposes to take in the matter.

Colonel SEELY: Yes, Sir. The Secretary of State has carefully considered Mr. Mangena's petition, and it has been decided, after consultation with the authorities of this House, that the best course will be to present a further Command Paper containing a full Report of the proceedings in the actions brought by the petitioner, showing that the jury found that the statement made in Mr. Ndelomba's Report were not true in substance and in fact. This will be done forthwith.

Holland's Import of Irish Built Vessels.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the statement in the latest Consular Report from Rotterdam and Flushing that the new steamer added to the Holland-America line was built at Belfast and launched on 3rd March; whether in the list of imports into Holland for the present year, this vessel will be credited to Ireland, in view of the fact that in the current Report no record is made of new vessels being purchased from Great Britain or Ireland; and whether, in view of the importance of the shipbuilding industry to Ireland, care will be taken that in recording the statistics of Irish imports into those countries which have agreed to keep separate records of Irish trade the number and value of Irish-built vessels shall be specified in the Consular Reports.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): I learn on inquiry from His Majesty's Consul at Rotterdam that the item "ships" is not especially mentioned in the monthly official statistics which are alone available when the Consul sends in his Report, but only in the official statistics for the whole year. In these circumstances, the Consul could not do more than state that the vessel was built in Ireland. The vessel will no doubt appear as desired in the official statistics for the year.

The Arrest of Mr. Luxenburg.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is yet in a position to announce the result of his claim on the Russian Government for compensation in connection with the unwarranted arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Luxenburg.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have nothing to add to the Answer I gave to the hon. Member on the 2nd instant.

Captain CRAIG: Are the Government using their best efforts to press their claim?

SIR EDWARD GREY: There are one or two difficult points in connection with it, and until they are thoroughly investigated it is impossible for me to come to a decision.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I shall repeat the Question this day fortnight.

British Access to Lake Albert Edward—Incorrect Maps.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received the Report of the Anglo-Congolese Frontier Commission; whether the investigations of the Commission have revealed a mistake in the maps on which the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1894 was passed, the effect of which is to deprive Great Britain of a strip of territory giving access to Lake Albert Edward; and whether any steps are being taken to rectify this error.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Report has been received, but has not yet been considered. A mistake in the maps, which is probably that alluded to by the hon. Member, was brought to the notice of His Majesty's Government in January, 1904, this was why the Commission was appointed.

Persia.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any further information with regard to the unrest in Persia.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The latest information points to fighting having ceased.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Cossacks guarding the approaches to the British legation in Teheran in order to prevent refugees from obtaining sanctuary there have been removed; can he state the nature of the powers conferred on their commander, Colonel Liakhoff; is it a fact that this officer was implicated in the *coup d'etat* of 1907; and will His Majesty's Government make friendly representations to that of Russia, with a view of securing that officers on the active list of the Russian Army shall in future strictly confine themselves to the function of maintaining order and not engage in operations for the suppression of popular rights guaranteed to the Persian people by the constitution.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Persian troops have been removed. Colonel Liakhoff was stated to have been appointed Governor of Teheran when a state of siege was proclaimed, but a Civil Governor has now been named. I have no information as to the part played by Colonel Liakhoff in the events of 1907; the Shah has announced his intention of maintaining the constitution; and there is no occasion for making representations.

MR. LYNCH asked how it was proposed to uphold the independence of Persia if Russian officers in the Persian service were to be permitted to override the provisions of the Persian constitution.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Colonel Liakhoff is in the employment of the Shah, and whatever action he took in the emergency which arose the other day was taken independently of his Government.

MR. LYNCH: That no doubt is constitutionally correct, but is not the Shah solely responsible for the Government of Persia?

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Does Colonel Liakhoff hold his commission in Russia?

SIR EDWARD GREY: His commission is under the Shah as instructor and commander of the Persian troops. He may be on the active list of the Russian army. If so, it is only in the same way as British officers are sometimes maintained on the active list of the British Army, but employed on service abroad under a foreign Government.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the hon. right Gentleman take steps to see that Russia does not bag the whole of Persia?

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Why was not that attended to when the King met the Czar?

*Mr. REES: There seems to be a wide impression that Cossacks are Russian troops, whereas they are Persian.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The Cossacks are Persians, not Russians.

British Vice-Consul at Santiago.

Mr. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he has received any complaints of the treatment by the British Vice-Consul at Santiago, Chili, of Mr. C. R. Pettit, a British subject; and, if so, will he say what he proposes to do under the circumstances.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have received a complaint on this matter; but as the action of the Vice-Consul at Santiago, who is an unsalaried officer, was taken in his private capacity, I am unable to intervene.

Mr. RICHARDSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Pettit was nominated for membership of the Union club, Santiago; and that he was blackballed at the instigation of the British Vice-Consul?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I understand that that is the complaint, but any action taken in connection with the club was taken by the Vice-Consul in his private capacity.

Apology Demanded from Persia.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any apology has been demanded from the Government of Persia for the disrespect shown to the British Legation at Teheran; and, if so, whether he can state the result.

Sir EDWARD GREY: An apology has been demanded from the Persian Government, and I understand that it will be forthcoming; but till it has been made in satisfactory terms the incident cannot be regarded as closed.

International Administration of Persia.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state how many people have been executed in Persia in connection with the recent disturbances; whether torture has been used in the case of any of the Nationalist Leaders, and, if so, in how many cases and to what extent; and whether His Majesty or His Majesty's Government has made any formal protest against these proceedings.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I do not know how many executions have taken place in connection with the recent disturbances in Persia, nor what methods have been employed by the Persian Government in dealing with any Persians. I do not see that any good result would follow if we departed from the policy of non-intervention, and I do not propose to take any step which would imply responsibility for internal affairs in Persia. I have already stated that we have demanded guarantees for the safety or proper treatment of refugees at the British Legation. I cannot go beyond that.

Old-Age Pensions.

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state what is the revised estimate of the increased cost of old-age pensions consequent upon the alteration, made during the Committee stage, of the sums payable in respect of two or more persons living together.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): The deletion of the provision reducing the amount of the pension in the case of two or more persons living together in the same house is estimated to increase the cost of the scheme, as compared with the original estimate, by £342,000.

Wholesale Wine Dealers' Licences.

Sir ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the possibility of issuing a special 10-guinea form of Excise licence, applicable to the cases of wholesale wine-dealers and shippers only, for which it would not be necessary to apply for a justices' licence in addition; and whether the Commissioners of Inland Revenue could issue such a new form of licence without any fresh legislation,

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: A new form of licence such as that suggested by my hon. friend could not be issued without fresh legislation.

British East African Railways.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any decision has been arrived at with reference to the financing of schemes of railway construction in British East Africa; and whether it is intended to make provision for this work during the present financial year.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The question is still under consideration; and I am unable to make any statement on the subject at present.

Royal Warrant Traders.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps, if any, he has taken to insure that firms enjoying the Royal Warrant or applying for the Royal Warrant observe the particulars clause and other regulations under the Health and Factory Laws.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W): As I have already said, I have nothing to do with the grant of the Royal Warrant to individual firms. All I can say is, that firms holding the warrants are subject to the same regulations and inspection as other firms, and that, if any failure to observe the Factory Act regulations comes to the knowledge of my Department, action will be taken.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Two months ago the right hon. Gentleman promised to make certain representations. Can he now say to whom they have been made and what was their nature?

MR. GLADSTONE: Representations have undoubtedly been made, but I should like to have notice of the Question.

Bedford Assault Conviction—Case of William Perdue.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received any fresh information with regard to the case of William Perdue, who was at Bedford sentenced to prison for assault; and, if so, whether such information will lead him to reconsider whether he can revise the sentence imposed.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have received some fresh information with regard to this case, and am having inquiry made. As soon as I am able to form a decision on the application made on the prisoner's behalf, I will let the hon. Member know.

Case of G. H. Fletcher, of Sheffield.

MR. W. THORNE, (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware of the sentence of two months' imprisonment passed upon G. H. Fletcher by the Sheffield stipendiary for addressing meetings in the public park; and whether, in view of the character of the sentence and Fletcher's previous good character, he will take steps to reduce the sentence.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have made careful inquiry into this case. The offence was persistent refusal to comply with a bye-law made by the local representative body in the public interest, and I regret that I should not feel justified in advising any interference.

MR. W. THORNE: Did not the corporation break their own bye-laws and thus cause all the trouble?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am not aware of that.

MR. W. THORNE: It is the fact.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I may add that if the person to whom the question refers cares to give any assurance that he will observe the bye-law I will give further consideration to the case.

Police Pensioners.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether police pensioners who attend at New Scotland Yard for the purpose of drawing their pensions are frequently kept waiting from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.; whether, being paid by cheque, they have to then proceed to Burlington Gardens to cash their cheque, thereby losing a day's work and a day's pay; whether, in the event of payment being made by post, several days elapse before the pensioner receives his pension; and if he will state what payment is made to the widow of a pensioner who dies during the week preceding that in which his pension is due.

MR. GLADSTONE: Pensioners who attend personally are required to be present before 11 a.m., and payment is usually made about 2 p.m. I am looking into the matter to see whether some improvement cannot be effected in the present system so as to avoid delay. Payment is made to those attending personally by cheque drawn on the Western Branch of the Bank of England; but every pensioner has the option of being paid through the post, in which event a money order is sent to him in almost all cases on the day following that on which his life certificate is received. Pensions are paid in advance, and consequently no further sum is payable in the event of death before the expiration of the period for which payment has been made. In some cases, however, where at the time of death a full year's pension has not been drawn, a gratuity is given to the widow.

Lunacy Certificates.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state what mania Mr. F. Watkins, late private Royal Army Medical Corps, was suffering from when he was admitted into the Chartham Asylum; and whether the chief superintendent expressed any opinion upon the man's condition during the seven weeks' stay in the institution.

MR. GLADSTONE: I do not think that it would be right to give details as to a person's mental condition in reply to Questions in this House, but I may refer the hon. Member to Section 82 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, which provides that the Secretary to the Commissioners in Lunacy shall, upon the discharge of a person who considers himself to have been unjustly confined as a lunatic, furnish to him, upon his request, a copy of the reception order and certificate upon which he was confined.

The Load Line.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the exact date when sanction was given by his Department for a change in the load line; by whom such change was asked for, and as to the total amount of additional tonnage vessels have been enabled to carry through such concession; and, further, as to whether it is the intention of the Government to give the House an opportunity to further consider the matter.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir H. KEARLEY, Devonport): The revised load line tables were sanctioned by the Board of Trade on 1st March, 1906. It is not possible to give any reliable estimate of the amount of additional tonnage that vessels have been enabled to carry owing to the change. The revision was made after prolonged inquiries and consideration by the Board of Trade in conjunction with Lloyd's Register, the British Corporation and *Bureau Veritas*, the three assigning bodies. My right hon. friend does not think any necessity has arisen for giving the House a special opportunity of considering the matter, but will be pleased to give the hon. Member any information in his power with regard to it.

MR. SUMMERBELL: Would it be right to assume that this change was initiated by the President without consideration of the views held by his predecessor in office?

*SIR H. KEARLEY: On the contrary, the arrangements for the change were commenced under the late Government.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): Is there any evidence forthcoming that any ship has been put in peril by the alteration?

SIR H. KEARLEY: We have no record of any danger having arisen from the regulation.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick) asked whether the change in the load line was not made behind the back of Parliament.

SIR H. KEARLEY: It was not made behind Parliament.

MR. JOYCE: Parliament was not sitting at the time. You know that.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE: Have any complaints been received from officers of vessels or other responsible persons as to danger arising from the new load line? Is the Department aware that several engineers have been imprisoned for refusing to go to sea in ships in which the load line had been altered?

SIR H. KEARLEY: We have no information of that.

Rents in Sunderland.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that, in the Report on the cost of living of the working classes issued by his Department, under the head Sunderland, page 449, the rents in the Harrison Buildings, which are situated in the eastern and most densely populated portion of the borough, are stated to be two rooms 3s. 9d. and 4s. per week, and three rooms 4s. 9d. and 5s. per week, whereas on page 450 it is stated that the rents generally charged in the other and better parts of the town are two rooms 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d., and three rooms 3s. 6d. to 5s.; and whether he will make further inquiries in regard to the matter with a view to correction.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): No doubt the points referred to in the Question will be taken into account when the Board of Trade make further inquiry into the cost of living at Sunderland.

MR. SUMMERBELL: When will the Board of Trade make further inquiry?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No doubt they will complete the inquiry on which they are now engaged before reopening any case.

Promotions of Postal Officials.

MR. MIDDLEBROOK (Leeds, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the average service of officers in the Post Office is taken into account with their qualifications when questions of seniority duties and promotion are dealt with; and whether he will explain why several officers of long service and good manipulative ability have been reduced to a lower round of duties and junior officers in service and salary substituted when a redistribution of duties recently took place at Leeds.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: In dealing with questions of promotion, consideration is given to seniority as well as to qualifications; and these considerations are also taken into account in any redistribution of duties.

School Accommodation at Westbury Leigh.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is now able to say whether he has directed the Wiltshire education authority to provide at once a temporary council school, in order to supply the deficiency of school places at Westbury Leigh; and whether he has declined to sanction the proposal to provide a second Church school for a population which is predominantly Nonconformists.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): It is not proposed to provide a second Church School but to enlarge the existing school by fifty-four places. The local education authority are unwilling to build a council school, and as additional accommodation is required the Board have decided that, in view of Section 9 of the Education Act, 1902, they have no alternative but to sanction the enlargement. I may add that the Board have satisfied themselves that there is sufficient accommodation in undenominational schools within easy reach for all children whose parents desire it.

Medical Inspection of School Children.

Mr. STARKEY (Nottinghamshire, Newark): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, if he will state what instructions are given to medical officers with regard to the medical examination of children in mixed schools, where only one room is available; and whether, owing to the natural objection entertained by parents, especially by those of the elder children, he will issue instructions that the boys and girls are not to be examined in the same room at the same time.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: I do not think any objection can be raised to certain portions of the medical examination of boys and girls, such as measuring and weighing, being conducted in the same room, but it is obviously necessary that some of the more strictly medical parts of the inspection should take place either in separate rooms or at different times. I do not think any general instructions are needed, but any complaints which are brought to my notice will be inquired into.

Deptford Cattle Market.

Mr. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that, although on two market days during the past month there was a large number of cattle in the lairages at the Deptford Market, and that many English buyers were present, no markets were held; whether he is aware that the withholding of such cattle from sale was a breach of the regulations governing Deptford Market; and, if so, can he state what steps the Board propose to take in the matter.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somerset, S.): The Board are informed that no animals were exposed for sale at Deptford Market on five of the accustomed market days in June, but, so far as can be ascertained, it is not the case that many, or indeed any, English buyers were present on those days. No breach of the regulations is committed by the withholding of cattle from sale, and animals may be bought and sold on other than market days.

Mr. BOWERMAN: Am I to understand that American or other firms may come to this country and take possession of one of our markets, and refuse to submit cattle for sale so that English traders shall not have the benefit of the market?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: American, no more than any other dealers, can be forced to sell cattle if they do not wish to do so, on a particular day.

Superannuation.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the number of ex-soldiers and ex-sailors affected by the decision of the Government under The Superannuation Act, 1859; and why the Treasury have thought fit to ascertain the views of other Departments in regard to one class of Civil servants when the Treasury refuses to inquire as to the number of ex-soldiers and ex-sailors who suffer undeserved loss by the decision of the Government.

Mr. BUCHANAN (for Mr. Hobhouse): My hon. friend has no information as to the first part of the hon. Member's Question; and the second part of it appears to raise questions of opinion rather than of fact.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Will the Secretary to the Treasury endeavour to ascertain the figures mentioned in the first part of the Question? Is it not the fact that recently the Treasury made inquiries in certain Government Departments as to the number of persons affected?

Mr. BUCHANAN said he could only refer the hon. Gentleman to the Answer to a Question in February last on the same subject.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I shall repeat my Question.

Girl Clerks in the Post Office.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether in view of fact that the new conditions of employment for girl clerks in the Post Office were drawn up on similar lines to the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants for the larger classes, he will consider the advisability of putting boy clerks, who are employed in several Government Departments and who do similar duties, under the same conditions of service as girl clerks in the Post Office.

Mr. BUCHANAN (for Mr. Hobhouse): I must refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. friend gave last Monday to a similar Question put by my hon. friend the Member for Exeter.

Supplementary Estimates.

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if it is proposed to present any further Supplementary Estimates before the conclusions of the days allotted for Committee of Supply.

Mr. BUCHANAN (for Mr. Hobhouse): The reply is in the affirmative.

New Fishery Cruiser for Scotland.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what sum has been taken, and is now available, for building or otherwise providing for the new fishery cruiser for Scotland; and when this vessel will be available for service.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): The sum now accumulated by the Fishery Board is sufficient for the purpose they have in view, but it is not advisable, in the public interest, that particulars should be published at this stage.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: When will it be possible to publish the particulars?

Mr. SINCLAIR: As soon as the arrangements are completed.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: This matter has been going on for some months. Cannot the right hon. Gentleman give a more definite indication?

Mr. SINCLAIR: This is a business transaction, involving the expenditure of public money. We are endeavouring to secure the best terms we can.

Mr. WATT: When will the vessel be available for service?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I cannot say.

Ayrshire Potato Diggers.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the conditions under which the potato diggers in Ayrshire and the adjacent counties are housed and fed; whether he is aware that some 2,000 of these workers, male and female, are from Achill Island and neighbouring places in the West of Ireland, that the season begins in June and ends in August, and that the majority of these people are obliged to sleep in barns, byres, cart-sheds, and outhouses, without any provision whatever for the separation of the sexes, with little or no accommodation for cooking or sanitation; and whether, seeing that many of the workers are young girls and boys of from fourteen years of age and upwards, and that as many as twenty or thirty of these sleep together on hay and bits of sacking in an old barn, and that numbers of slum dwellers and tramps are engaged in this work, he will, in the interests of public decency and for the purpose of affording protection to the workers from Ireland, especially the young girls, have inquiries made with a view to the provision of proper accommodation for these workers.

Mr. SINCLAIR: My attention has been directed to this matter. I am anxious to do what is possible to bring about improvement, but it is right that

I should say that I must not be taken as endorsing in all particulars or as general the description of these conditions given by the hon. Member. The Local Government Board have held and just concluded an inquiry into the housing of potato diggers in Scotland with a view to the adoption of such improvements as are possible. I am informed that the inquiry has already resulted in some improvement, and I shall confer with the Board as to the adoption of measures to meet the evils referred to in the latter part of the hon. Member's Question.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that labour is almost impossible to obtain on any terms whatever, and will he consider the advisability of providing allotments for the villagers so as to induce people to stay on the land?

MR. SINCLAIR: That is a matter which deserves consideration.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Will the House have an opportunity of seeing the Local Government Board's Report?

MR. SINCLAIR: It is published every year.

Morphy Estate, Knocknagree, County Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have made any recent inquiries into the Morphy estate, Scrahan, Knocknagree, County Cork, in connection with the application of Patrick Guiney for reinstatement in his former holding; have they been made aware that the planter tenant has expressed his willingness to surrender the holding on certain reasonable terms; and, if so, will the Commissioners send their inspector to the locality with a view to expedite matters.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The Estates Commissioners have made inquiries into this case and are aware that the present occupier of the holding is prepared to surrender it to the evicted tenant if provided with an equivalent holding elsewhere. The Commissioners will consider the question of providing the present occupier with such a holding in connection with the allotment of any untenanted land which they may acquire in the same county.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Was any pressure brought to bear on the planter tenant?

MR. CHERRY: I am not aware of any.

Morrogh Bernard Estate, Kells.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a Memorial signed by the tenants on the Morrogh Bernard estate at Roads, near Kells, County Kerry, has been forwarded to the Estates Commissioners, setting out the circumstances under which they recently signed purchase agreements; and whether, in view of the statements therein contained and of the fact that some of the present rents are double the valuation, an inquiry will be held, and inspection made, before any sale is sanctioned.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have received the Memorial in question, and will give it due consideration in the event of proceedings being instituted before them for the sale of the estate referred to.

Beardsley-Evans Estate, County Cork.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any application has been made to the Estates Commissioners in respect to the sale of the Beardsley-Evans estate, near Charleville, County Cork, which is now in the Chief Receiver's Office, Four Courts, Dublin; whether he is aware that the receivers, Messrs. Kincaid, Dublin, entered into negotiations with the tenants headed by their clergyman, Rev. Father Blake, P.P., for the purchase of this property, but failed to proceed with the said negotiation without explanation; and whether, in view of the fact that the receivers are pressing for payment in full of accruing rents and in some cases payment of the hanging gale, contrary to the rules of the estate, and that the nominal owners receive little or no benefit owing to heavy mortgage charges and receivers fees, the Commissioners will communicate with the Land Judge with a view to the purchase of the property in the joint interests of the owners and the tenants.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed by the Registrar of the Land Judge's Court that no proceedings for the sale of this estate are pending in that Court. A receiver was appointed in a Chancery action, and the tenants, at one of his rent collections, made him a verbal offer for purchase which he was about to communicate to the Court when he received notice that the action had been dismissed. He denies having unduly pressed the tenants for rent. The Estates Commissioners are unable to trace the receipt of any application in the matter, but will make inquiries on the subject.

MR. FLYNN: As this is one of the class of estates the Land Judge has expressed his anxiety to deal with, will the Estates Commissioners communicate with the Judge as soon as possible?

MR. CHERRY: There are no proceedings by consent pending for the sale of this estate. A receiver was appointed in a Chancery action, but that action has been dismissed.

Strokestown Cattle-drive.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Leiutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the stock belonging to a Mr. Richard Hague, at Greyfield, near Stokestown, County Roscommon, was driven off his farm on the night of Tuesday, 23rd June last; and will he say what arrests have been made and what sentences passed on the perpetrators of the outrage.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that some of Mr. Richard Hague's cattle were driven off his land between midnight on 20th June and seven o'clock on the following morning. The animals were recovered uninjured. The offenders were not discovered, and consequently no arrests have been possible.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: How far were these cattle driven?

MR. CHERRY: I cannot say, but they were recovered uninjured.

Cattle-driving in West Meath and Longford—Judges' Remarks.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the address of Mr. Justice Gibson, at the opening of the West Meath Assizes at Mullingar, when he stated that there had been twenty-nine cases of cattle-driving, in none of which was anybody made amenable or prosecuted, and that the state of the county appeared to be far from satisfactory; to the statement of Mr. Justice Kenny, in addressing the grand jury at the opening of the assizes for the County Leitrim at Carrick-on-Shannon, that he could not congratulate the jury on the peaceable and orderly state of the county; to the remarks of Mr. Justice Madden, when opening the assizes for the County of Longford, when he stated that he had been supplied with official information showing that the crime of boycotting and cattle-driving existed in the county to an extent that led to the conclusion that its condition was other than satisfactory; and to the address of the Lord Chief Baron to the grand jury of County Clare, when he stated the number of outrages specially reported since March last, seventy-four of which were of an agrarian character, an increase of forty outrages as compared with the corresponding period of last year, that five persons were under constant police protection and sixty-five protected by patrol, an increase over those of last year, that there were thirty-two derelict evicted farms and forty-eight cattle-drives since last assizes; and will he say what steps the Government propose to take to restore law and order in the counties named.

MR. CHERRY: I have seen a newspaper report of Mr. Justice Gibson's remarks to the effect mentioned in the Question. I am informed that in two of the cases of cattle-driving referred to in Westmeath offenders were arrested and bound to keep the peace. As regards the remarks attributed to the learned Judges at the three other Assizes mentioned I have nothing to add to the full Answers which I gave yesterday to similar Questions put by the hon. Member for Mid Armagh. In each of the counties named full measures within the ordinary law are being taken for the preservation of the peace and the punishment of offenders.

Captain CRAIG: Do the Government pay any attention whatever to the weighty words which fall from the Judges who have to try these cases? Will they not take some other measures to stamp out this horrible state of lawlessness?

Mr. CHERRY: The Government pay every attention to the observations—weighty and other—of the learned Judges. They have taken every possible measure that comes within the ordinary law to stamp out lawlessness in Ireland.

Mr. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there are in Ireland many persons deliberately putting themselves in the way of acquiring patrol protection from the police merely in order to supply hon. Gentlemen above the gangway with ammunition for firing in this House?

Captain CRAIG: May I ask whether the Act which stands at present on the Statute-book for suppressing outrages of this kind is any part of the ordinary common law?

Mr. CHERRY: No, Sir.

Cloonguish Grazing Lands.

Mr. J. PHILLIPS (Longford. S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have made any overtures or request to Colonel Sholto Douglas to sell the grazing lands known as the Scotch Quarters, Cloonguish, County Longford, for the purpose of increasing the uneconomic holdings on the part of the property sold to the tenants, as it was from, or on account of the evictions from, the Scotch Quarters that has made this division a congested district, and has caused so much unrest in this district of County Longford; and, if not, will he request them to do so.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have approached Colonel Douglas with a view to entering into negotiations for the purchase of certain untenanted lands stated to be in his possession, but have not yet received any reply.

Guernon Estate, Durrus Peninsula.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Guernon estate, on the Durrus Peninsula, was offered for sale last February to the Congested Districts Board, and that the Board at their last meeting, owing to the want of funds, decided not to make an offer for the purchase of this estate; whether the Treasury will be able, before the Board's next meeting, to put them in a position to do so, and, if not, how long the delay will be allowed by the Treasury to continue; whether he is aware that in November, 1904, the Congested Districts Board purchased the estate of the representatives of D. O'Donovan in the Durrus Peninsula; and why this estate is not yet vested in the Congested Districts Board.

Mr. CHERRY: It is the fact that the Congested Districts Board have declined to negotiate for the purchase of the Guernon estate owing to the want of funds. The question of increasing the Board's funds for the purchase of estates cannot be dealt with apart from the legislation which it is proposed to introduce in the autumn as the result of the Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion. The delay in the case of the O'Donovan estate is not due to any question of funds, but to a difficulty in regard to the vendor's title. It is expected that this difficulty will shortly be settled.

Morragh Bernard Estate, Kerry.

Mr. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why the Estates Commissioners have not dealt with the cases of Morty Buckley and Timothy Buckley, on the Morragh Bernard estate, County Kerry; and if he will state the cause of the delay in assisting these evicted tenants, who have been restored to their farms by the landlord, and into the circumstances of whose position several different inspectors of the Estates Commissioners have inquired.

Mr. CHERRY: The hon. Member has already been informed that a purcase agreement in the case of Timothy Buckley has been lodged with the Estates Commissioners and that the Commissioners have sanctioned a free grant in the case. A purchase agreement signed by Mortley Buckley has now been lodged with the Commissioners, who are taking the necessary steps in that case also.

Mr. J. MURPHY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the free grant will be given, seeing that these tenants have been reinstated for a considerable period and the Estate Commissioners have done nothing in the case?

Mr. CHERRY: It is a very difficult case, but there are thousands of similar ones pending.

Mr. J. MURPHY: Will the right hon. Gentleman make representations to the Estates Commissioners to have these cases dealt with immediately? There can be no difficulty in doing that.

Mr. CHERRY: But why should they not be dealt with in their order?

Mount Shannon Estate, Limerick.

Mr. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that the tenants who have been reinstated on the Mount Shannon estate, County Limerick, and who were evicted tenants, have been processed for rates and taxes on all the land; whether he is aware that a large portion of this land has been thickly timbered and that this timber has been sold to a merchant who is having it cut down and removed; that the tenants allege that this land is useless to them at present; and, if so, whether something will be done to relieve the tenants from rates on this portion of the estate until the timber is removed and the land can be made use of by the tenants.

Mr. CHERRY: The tenant purchasers have been put in possession of the holdings on this estate and are liable for the rates and taxes from the date on which they received possession. There is no power to relieve them from that liability. The timber was not included in the resale to the tenants.

Mr. JOYCE: Is the Attorney-General aware of the fact that these evicted tenants are mostly in very straitened circumstances; that they have not been put in possession of the land, because it has been out of tenure and has been in possession of a timber merchant who bought the timber from the Estates Commissioners? Why should these poor people be liable for rates and taxes on land which they cannot make use of? I think it is pretty straight.

Mr. CHERRY: They have been formally put in possession, but unfortunately owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case they are not able to make use of it. The case is one of great difficulty, but they were put in possession by their own consent.

Mr. JOYCE: Why, if they are only formally in possession, should they be compelled to pay rates and taxes?

Mr. CHERRY: Because they are the rated occupiers of the land. The timber merchant is not in possession. He only goes on to the land to cut down the timber. He is not in occupation.

Mr. JOYCE: Well, I say it is all humbug their having to pay rates and taxes.

Belfast Prison Committee.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can explain the circumstances under which an order received from Dublin Castle by the Belfast Corporation, directing the latter to appoint six members to serve on the visiting committee of the Belfast Prison, was countermanded after the Corporation had gone to the trouble of selecting the gentlemen for the office; and whether any further communication has been made to the Corporation in connection with the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The Grand Jury of the County Borough of Belfast appoint annually six Justices to serve as members of the visiting committee of Belfast Prison. On 22nd June, the Belfast Corporation were, through an oversight, requested to make these appointments. The mistake was corrected by a letter addressed to the Town Clerk on 2nd July, but it appears that the Corporation had made the selections on that day. I am asked to express regret for any inconvenience which may have been caused to the Corporation.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say who was responsible for this oversight?

MR. CHERRY: One of the subordinate officials at Dublin Castle. I am sure the hon. Member will not press for his name to be given.

Drogheda Evicted Tenant.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the application of Michael Tiernan, Wood Mill, Townley Hall, Drogheda, to be reinstated in his former holding has yet been considered by the Estates Commissioners; and if it is proposed to give him an equivalent holding on the estate of R. B. Balfour, Townley Hall, Drogheda.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have considered the application of Michael Tiernan, but are not at present in a position to state what action they will take upon it.

Kellet's Estate, County Meath.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the number of uneconomic holdings on Kellet's Estate, County Meath, and to the fact that the vendor has refused to sell any untenanted land except that of the worst quality, which the tenants have absolutely refused to accept for the enlargement of their holdings, the Estates Commissioners will sanction the advance of money for the purchase of the estate.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have instructed their inspector to prepare a scheme for the allotment of the untenanted land which is proposed to be sold in this case, and until the Commissioners have received and considered the proposed scheme they cannot express any opinion upon the question raised by the hon. Member.

Nobber Evicted Tenant.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the application of Miss Margaret Clarke, Possextown, Nobber, County Meath, to be reinstated in her former holding has been considered by the Estates Commissioners; and, if so, with what result.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have nothing to add to the reply which was given to the hon. Member's similar Question on 1st April last.

Navan Evicted Tenant.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have considered the application of Miss Norah Kieran, Leggah House, Navan, County Meath, to be reinstated in her former holding; and whether, in the event of the landlord refusing to put her in occupation of her old holding, they will exercise the powers vested in them to compulsorily acquire the land for the purpose of her reinstatement.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners are unable to reinstate the applicant in her former holding, but will consider the question of allotting her a farm on some untenanted land for the purchase of which they are negotiating.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: Can the right hon. Gentleman answer the last portion of the Question as to the exercise of compulsory powers?

MR. CHERRY: I cannot give any promise on their behalf. I do not think the Commissioners will. I hope the tenant will be willing to take another holding.

Mr. PATRICK WHITE: She is disinclined to take any land except her old farm.

Mr. CHERRY: Then I am afraid she must go without a farm. I do not think the Estates Commissioners experience any great difficulty in getting people to settle on these untenanted lands.

Ballinatona Lands.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received a statement from Patrick J. Creedan, of Ballinatona, Millstreet; if so, what action is it proposed to take in the matter thereof; and will he say whether, in the opinion of the Commissioners, any of the lands of Ballinatona in the Land Judge's Court can be made available for the purpose of reinstating evicted tenants.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have received the statement referred to in the Question. They understand that, consequent on the coming of age of the present owner, the proceedings in the Land Judge's Court are being continued in his name. When this has been done the Commissioners propose, if their offer for purchase be accepted, to allot portions of the land to evicted tenants.

Sir George Colthurst's, Cork, Estate.

Mr. SHEEHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the report of the Inspector appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the estate, of Sir George Colthurst, County Cork, has been received by the Estates Commissioners; was this estate taken out of its order of priority, and, if so, will he explain the reason why; is there a field known as the village field, Ballyvourney, let on the grazing system, and, therefore, available for distribution; will he state what quantity of untenanted land on this estate may be acquired by the Commissioners for the benefit of the labourers and uneconomic holders; have the cases of the excluded tenants, Messrs. Henderson, Byrne, and Forrest, of Ardrum, Inniscarra, been fully investigated, and, if so, with what result; and whether the tenancies of these tenants are exactly the same as that of Jeremiah Hegarty, whom the Estates Commissioners, after a public hearing, judicially decided was entitled to purchase as a *bona fide* tenant on the estate.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have not yet received their inspector's report on this case, and, therefore, have no present information upon the matters of detail referred to in the Question. The Commissioners, in pursuance of their powers under the Regulations, expedited the inspection of the case out of its order of priority, because they had intervened as conciliators between the landlord and tenants in pursuance of No. 8 of the Regulations.

Lissarda Labourer's Cottage.

Mr. SHEEHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that proceedings were instituted some time ago by the Macroom Rural District Council against Mrs. Kate Foley, tenant of a labourer's cottage at Springhill, Lissarda; that the tenant offered to pay all liabilities and to sign a bond for rent when the cottage was put into proper repair; is it the duty of the district council to insist in such cases that the contractor performs his contract according to plans and specifications; and, seeing that Mrs. Foley complains of the defective condition of her dwelling-house, will he recommend that her complaint be attended to before further vexatious proceedings are taken against her.

Mr. CHERRY: The Local Government Board do not appear to have received any complaint in this matter, which is one that must be left in the hands of the rural district council. Assuming that the tenant has entered into the usual form of agreement, the rent must be paid unless it can be shown that the cottage is unfit for occupation, and the Board have no reason to suppose that this is the case. Any representations in the matter should be addressed to the rural district council.

Falls Road, Belfast, Disturbances.

MR. SLOAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of officers, non-commissioned officers, and members of the Royal Irish Constabulary who were present on the Falls Road, Belfast, on 11th August, 1907, when the Riot Act was read and the military compelled to fire on the rioters; how many of these men were afterwards examined before the coroner and jury at the inquest held on the persons killed; what was the nature of their evidence; and is it the intention of the Government to have them examined before the Select Committee at present sitting.

MR. CHERRY: My right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War has asked me to answer this Question. On the occasion referred to, which was 12th, not 11th, of August, 1907, three sergeants and about ten constables of the Royal Irish Constabulary were present at the point at which firing took place. Two of the sergeants were examined at the inquest, and their evidence was to the effect that a large mob of rioters were fiercely stoning the police and military, some of whom were struck by stones and knocked down before the firing took place. The question of the witnesses to be examined before the Select Committee was one for the decision of the Committee itself. I understand that the Committee has concluded the examination of witnesses, and has adjourned for the consideration of its Report.

Irish Bad Debts.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer how many loans advanced by the Treasury to public bodies or private persons in Ireland have been written off as bad debts within the past fifty years; and what is the aggregate amount of such bad debts.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The only loans made by the Treasury in Ireland which have been written off in the last fifty years were the loans for Tithe Relief under the Act 3 and 4 Will. IV. c. 100, amounting to £900,000, the whole of which amount was remitted in 1881 under the Act 44 and 45 Vict., c. 32. The circumstances are explained in the schedule to that Act. The Departments which in modern times have been responsible for Government loans in Ireland are the Public Works Loan Commissioners, the Commissioners of Public Works, Ireland, and the Irish Land Commission. For particulars of the loans made by those Departments which have been remitted, I beg to refer the hon. Baronet to the Annual Account of the Local Loans Fund (House of Commons Paper No. 48 of the present session, pages 21–25).

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Have not the Government made a considerable profit on loans advanced to Ireland?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I should be surprised to hear that the Treasury had made much profit.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it not a well-known fact that the Irish people have been very punctual in the repayment of loans, and that as far as land loans are concerned, although a large sum has been advanced, there are hardly any arrears at all?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I believe that is correct.

Irish Expenditure.

SIR F. BANBURY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total expenditure out of the Exchequer, or out of taxes raised by the authority of Parliament, upon purely Irish purposes in the year 1898–9; and what is estimated to be the corresponding figure in 1908–9.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The total expenditure upon purely Irish purposes in the year 1898–9 was £6,477,000. To enable an estimate to be made of the corresponding figure for the current year, I must ask the hon. Baronet to give longer notice.

SIR F. BANBURY: Will the right hon. Gentleman give a written reply, with all the figures, this day week?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes, Sir.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman also be kind enough to furnish details so that we may know what are treated as purely Irish services?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I shall be glad to do so.

New Issue of Irish Land Stock.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the recent issue of Irish Land Stock was offered to the public at 89½ when the market price of previous issues was 92; whether the premium obtainable for the new issue shows that the price fixed was too low; and whether in those circumstances the Government will relieve Irish funds from the loss thus involved.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The price of issue of the stock was fixed in consultation with the usual advisers of His Majesty's Government in such matters. The fact that the issue has been a remarkable success and that the new stock commands a premium does not show that the price fixed was too low. The charge entailed by the issue of the stock at a discount will fall on the Ireland Development Grant, as provided by the Land Act of 1903.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Why was this money not obtained from the Commissioners of National Debt, as recommended in the Report of the Treasury Committee?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Because they had not got it, I assume.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Did not this Report suggest that the money required for land purchase in the next three years should be provided in this way? Did not the Committee know what they were about in making that recommendation?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: All I know is that the money was not available.

Mr. LONSDALE: On what day did the Treasury decide to make this issue?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: It was decided upon finally last week, a very short time before the issue.

Mr. LONSDALE: On Saturday?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: No; the decision was come to before Saturday.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Was the loan subscribed forty times over?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes; somewhere about that.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Ireland cannot be in a very bad state after all.

Strangford Bar Whistling Buoy.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the whistling buoy the Irish Lights Commissioners have decided to place at Strangford Bar, County Down, is yet in position; and, if not, can he promise that it will be moored before the autumn, when rough weather is generally experienced in that locality.

Sir H. KEARLEY: I can at present add nothing to the reply which my right hon. friend gave to this Question a week ago.

Captain CRAIG: Can the hon. Gentleman state the price of these buoys?

Sir H. KEARLEY: No, Sir; but I will inquire.

Captain CRAIG: And if he finds it to be reasonable will he, in view of the fact that stiff weather will shortly set in in that locality, see that a buoy is at once provided?

Sir H. KEARLEY: The authorities are probably aware of the fact stated by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

Kenmare Tram Service.

Mr. BOLAND: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the resolution adopted at the public meeting in Kenmare, County Kerry, on 29th June, protesting against the proposed change in the railway time table, whereby intending passengers to Kenmare by the night train would be detained at Headford Junction for more than an hour; and whether he will make representations to the railway company with a view to securing an arrangement whereby this inconvenience and discomfort, and resulting interference with the business of the town of Kenmare, will be obviated.

SIR H. KEARLEY: The Board of Trade have not seen the resolution referred to, but they have communicated with the railway company, who state that the train service on the branch line between Headford Junction and Kenmare is arranged with a view to affording the best connections practicable, and that the alteration referred to by the hon. Member gives an additional connection from Rosslare and Waterford and other places on the route.

Parliamentary Papers.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the excessive number of Parliamentary Papers sent to each Member of the House; and, if so, whether he will appoint a small Committee to look into this matter in order to economise the money of the country.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I understand that the Select Committee on Official Publications has this matter under consideration, and if my hon. friend will communicate with them, I have no doubt that they will be glad to have the advantage of his views.

Appointments of Lords-Lieutenant.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether Lord-Lieutenancies of counties are now given as reward for work in connection with the Volunteers and the new Territorial Army; and, if so, will he say how many Lords-Lieutenant were appointed for Scotland during 1907 and 1908, and how many of these were appointed on account of their services to the Volunteer movement.

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir. I would refer my hon. friend to the statement I made yesterday, from which he will see that these appointments are not made on the grounds suggested.

MR. WATT: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the latter part of my Question?

MR. ASQUITH: I think the Answer I have given covers it.

Legislative Machinery.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will state when he proposes to place upon the Order Paper his proposals with regard to carrying over Bills from one session to another.

MR. ASQUITH: I do not know to what proposals the hon. Baronet refers. The Government are not committed to take any action in the matter, which, however, in my opinion, deserves serious consideration.

Finance Bill.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the Committee stage of the Finance Bill will be proceeded with.

MR. ASQUITH: I hope the Committee stage of the Finance Bill will be taken on Tuesday; but I shall be making a full statement as to the business of the House to-morrow.

Inter-Imperial Communication.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can state when he expects to be in a position to announce the decision of the Government in reference to the scheme of inter-Imperial communication.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not in a position to make any statement at present.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Will the right hon. Gentleman be in a position to make a statement by the conclusion of this portion of the session?

MR. ASQUITH: The matter is now under consideration by a Committee who have not yet reported.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) asked as to the course of business.

Mr. ASQUITH said that to-morrow, after disposal of the Motion for suspension of the eleven o'clock rule, a number of small Bills would be taken, including the Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill, Patents and Designs Bill, Tuberculosis (Ireland) Prevention Bill, and the Housing of Working Classes (Ireland) Bill. On Monday he proposed to take Navy Votes in Committee of Supply; on Tuesday and Wednesday, Committee on the Finance Bill; and on Thursday, Supply again, the Post Office Vote, and, should discussion on this close at ten o'clock the Scottish Votes.

Mr. WALTER LONG: When is it proposed to take the other Army Votes?

Mr. ASQUITH: I cannot say.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) asked whether there would be any discussion on the Treasury Vote. He added that on that it was desired to discuss a question of some interest with regard to the settlement of disputes on wages questions in the Civil Service.

Mr. ASQUITH could hold out no hope of such a discussion, but a discussion could be raised on the Appropriation Bill.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman knew that the Treasury Vote had not been discussed during the present Parliament.

Mr. ASQUITH: Nor do I think it was during the last Parliament.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): What time will be given for the Army Votes?

Mr. ASQUITH said he hoped half a day would be given for Army Votes.

Mr. JAMES HOPE: What will be the business for to-morrow week?

Mr. ASQUITH said that he would probably propose a Procedure Motion in regard to the remaining stages of the Licensing Bill.

Mr. CATHCART WASON asked as to the Oyster and Mussel Fishery Provisional Order Confirmation Bill. He understood it was to come on at half-past ten, but that there could not by any possibility be a discussion. As he had been bitterly attacked with regard to it he thought he ought to have some opportunity of replying, otherwise he might have to raise it as a question of privilege.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: If a Motion is made with regard to this Bill from the Treasury Bench the hon. Member will have his opportunity.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: But suppose no Motion is made?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Then the Bill would be put down for another day.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston) asked as to the publication with the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday last of the Answers given to Questions addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer which, although starred Questions, were issued as if unstarred. He wished to know by what authority a Minister imposed that additional charge on the public.

***Mr. SPEAKER** said it would be inconvenient if all Ministers adopted the practice of issuing with the Votes Answers to Questions addressed to them verbally. But he did not think that was the practice. His attention had not been called to this particular matter, but it was sometimes convenient that where an Answer contained a number of figures it should be handed in at the Table.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): Might not a good deal of the cost of printing be saved if copies of complicated Answers were placed in the Library for reference?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: It may be convenient to hon. Members to have them printed with the Votes in case they wish to forward copies to those at whose instance the Question is put.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: May I explain that the reason these Questions were handed in was that they contained a good many figures. The Answers were too long to read to the House, and I thought it better to hand them in.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I was not referring to Answers of that nature.

Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) asked to whom he should apply in the event of a Return promised not being printed.

***Mr. SPEAKER:** If the Return has been ordered by the House, and the hon. Member will address his remonstrance to me, I will inquire of the printer and get it as quickly as possible.

Mr. R. DUNCAN: But I decline to badger you, Sir.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee C.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 223.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 223.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 307.]

TELEGRAPH (CONSTRUCTION) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee C.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 224.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 224.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 308.]

REGISTRATION BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 309.]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

Second Report brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 225.]

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 310.]

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 311.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Handloom Weaving (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Herbert Samuel, and Mr. Attorney-General; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Birrell, Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland, and Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee: That they had added to Standing Committee A. the following fifteen Members (in respect of the Handloom Weaving (Ireland) Bill); Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Crean, Mr. Kavanagh, Mr. Condon, Sir Walter Nugent, Mr. Thomas Lorimer Corbett, Mr. MacCaw, Mr. Sloan, Mr. Glendinning, Mr. Brocklehurst, Mr. Sears, Mr. Jackson, Mr. M'Callum, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Russell.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee

B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Bill): Mr. Paulton; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Hobhouse.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C. (in respect of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill): Mr. Soames, Mr. Walker, Mr. Hastings Duncan, Mr. Vivian, Mr. Cave, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, and Colonel Sir Ivor Herbert; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Henry, Mr. Hemmerde, Mr. Beck, Mr. Albert Stanley, Mr. Hicks Beach, Mr. Bowles, and Mr. Ellis Davies.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had added to Standing Committee C. the following fifteen Members (in respect of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill): Mr. Watt, Sir Clifford Cory, Mr. Walton, Mr. Lupton, Mr. Markham, Mr. James Mason, Mr. Goulding, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. McArthur, Mr. John Wilson, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Thomas Richards, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Glover, and Mr. Keir Hardie.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (SCOTLAND).

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The Bill which I have now the honour of asking the House to allow me to introduce is substantially the same Bill as that which was read a first time and circulated last session. I was anxious that the opinion of Scotland should be obtained upon that measure, and specially requested that the important professional bodies of the country should consider it in detail and formulate their opinions regarding it. I have to acknowledge very gratefully the helpful co-operation of all these public bodies, and I desire to explain to the House that I have been able to give effect to various amendments on points of detail, all of which, however, have been forwarded to me with expressions of marked approval of the substance and urgency of the measure itself. It is now twenty-one years since the present Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Kingsburgh, succeeded in carrying into law a great and much needed amendment of the criminal procedure in the Supreme Courts of Scotland, and in cutting down large masses of useless formalities, and introducing businesslike methods of accuracy and precision. There was thus effected a very notable judicial reform in Scotland, and reform on similar lines and applicable to all the Courts of summary jurisdiction throughout the country is for some time overdue. Advantage has accordingly been taken of this opportunity of removing many archaic and complex forms by the substitution of others on the lines of the Act of 1887. When I explain to the House further that the proceedings of these inferior Courts are regulated by no fewer than four general statutes, viz.:—The Summary Procedure Act, 1864; the Summary Prosecutions Appeals Act, 1875; the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1881; the Burgh Police Act, 1892; not to speak of other local and municipal Acts, it will be at once seen that the necessity for simplifying and codifying the whole mass of this legislation is manifest; and this object, I trust, is attained in the measure. One figure which I venture to give will illustrate to the House the practical need to which I allude. The three great Burgh Statutes which contain procedure clauses are the General Act of 1892, and the main Municipal Statutes applicable to Glasgow and Edinburgh. Taken together, these statutes contain no fewer than 1303 clauses. The codes of procedure in various respects are in conflict, and I think both the magistracy and the public will be thankful to have a harmonised and substituted code provided in a single Act. I cannot, of course, in introducing a Bill give details as to all those items of substantive reform which it contains. For instance, the limit of sentence in the case of Sheriff Summary trial has been raised from two to six months in accord with principles given effect to in various special statutes. Power has been given to accept admissions of facts and documents, proof of which, although they were mere matters of form, has hitherto been necessitated because the case was a criminal and not a civil one. These two instances may indicate to the House that not a little has been done in a direction which I trust the House will highly favour, namely, the avoiding of delay over the cases of untried prisoners. I give these as illustrations of the type of business-like reform which the Bill is meant to favour. I have to explain further, however, that there has arisen in the course of years in Scotland a body of legal decisions on points of legal technique the result of which has put a premium upon the ingenuity of the finder of flaws and a real obstacle in the way of administration of justice by summary Courts with any sense of security. The instances are numerous, and one of them, which is to hand, I may cite. A prisoner was convicted of two separate offences—a somewhat brutal assault and also a breach of the peace. He pleaded guilty to both, but because the clerk entered the conviction as of a "crime" instead of the plural "crimes" the Court held that the conviction was bad, and the man, a criminal on two counts by his own confession, was on account of this slip sent home to his friends and his relations; a slip of grammar or the pen had let him prematurely loose upon society. The Bill accordingly endeavours to put a stop to such things by giving ampler powers to the High Court to prevent miscarriages of justice, and to see that unless the accused has been misled or prejudiced thereby, such flaws shall not invalidate the proceedings. In accomplishing such a work of codifying and simplifying the law it has been necessary to frame a measure of some bulk. It contains seventy-seven clauses, and I have adopted the procedure of scheduling not only convenient forms of complaint, such as I have referred to, but also the sections of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1887, so as to avoid as much as may be the awkwardness of legislation by reference. In regard to such measures I think one fact is too often forgotten, viz., the debt of gratitude in which the whole country stands to the Judges of these inferior Courts. I do not refer merely to sheriffs, but to that large body of painstaking magistrates who, without remuneration, from day to day and week to week, perform many an irksome judicial duty. And if in addition to satisfying the more abstract demand for a less complex judicial code the measure should succeed in lightening and simplifying the task of the magistracy throughout Scotland, such a work is well worthy of the labour of Parliament. I add in conclusion that the Bill is not inconsistent with that general body of humane legislation as to children, the probation of offenders and the like—which has recently appeared or will shortly appear upon the Statute-book. And from the Scottish point of view this measure will form a legislative complement to the Sheriff Courts Bill which, with the assent and co-operation of all parties in the House, was last year passed into law. May I bespeak a similar assent and co-operation in this instance? Without these, for it is in no respect a party measure, the Bill cannot this year reach the Statute-book, but with these I think the House may rest assured that the passage of this Bill into law will substantially promote the prompt, effective, and sound administration of justice.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to regulate and amend the Law relating to Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Procedure in Scotland"—(*Mr. Thomas Shaw.*)

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) did not think this was the Bill that ought to be brought forward in the way it had been. It was a Bill of great complexity; it largely increased the powers of summary jurisdiction in Scotland, as the Lord-Advocate had stated, and contained seventy-seven clauses. Leave to bring in Bills of less complexity had been refused on many occasions, and he thought the Government should not bring in so complicated a measure at this period of the session, when there was no time to consider its very numerous clauses. He would divide the House against it if he was the only one who went into the "No" Lobby.

Question put.

The House divided, Ayes, 261; Noes, 55. (Division List No. 181).

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Asquith,Rt.Hon.HerbertHenry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baring,Godfrey Isle of Wight)
Baring,Capt.Hn. G (Winchester
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.SydneyCharles
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,CH(Sussex,E.Grinst'd)
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar,Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glen-Coats,SirT.(Renfrew,W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.SirW.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,RobertV.(Montrose
Hardie,J.Keir(MerthyrTydvil)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Heaton, John Henniker
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,T.Arnold(Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John(Gateshead)
Jones,SirD.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett F. W.
Joyce Michael
Kavanagh Walter M.
Kearley Sir Hudson E.
Kincaid-Smith Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb,Edmund G.(Leominster)
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A.(Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lea,HughCecil(St.Pancras, E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood.Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(FalkirkBg'hs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh,Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mansfield,H.Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan,Francis E.(Leitrim,N.)
Menzies, Walter
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan,J.Lloyd(Carmarthen)
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Partick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price,SirRobertJ.(Norfolk,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)

Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick,B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Sherwell, Arthur James
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn.A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,SirEdward(Salisbury)
Thomas,Abel (Carmarthen,E.)
Thomas,Sir A.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thomson,W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason,JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley,John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.SirThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson,Henry J. (Yorks,W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W.(St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley,Rt.Hon.C. B. Stuart-
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,RtHn SirAlex F.
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hon.SirH.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.MichaelHughHicks
Bull, Sir William James
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, SirHenry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,SirFredDixon
Fell,Arthur
Gordon, J.
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hills, J. W.
Hope,JamesFitzalan(Sheffield)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nield, Herbert
Parker,SirGilbert(Gravesend)
Renton, Leslie
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield,SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford,East)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker,Col.W.H.(Lancashire)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Earl Winterton and Mr. Bowles.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Lord-Advocate and Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To regulate and amend the Law relating to Summary Jurisdiction and Criminal Procedure in Scotland." Presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 312.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, "That the Proceedings on the Old-Age Pensions Bill have precedence this day of the business of Supply.—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Order for the Third Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): In rising to move the rejection of this Bill, I am of course well aware that under normal circumstances, and in a normal case, to ask the House of Commons to reject a Bill which has been considered through all its successive stages, would be no doubt a rather strong demand. But I have no doubt in making this Motion, that both I who make it, and so many of my hon. friends who may be good enough to support it, will be represented throughout the country as having shown a callous and culpable indifference to the sufferings of the themselves, for introducing such a procedure is that they have never had the time or the inclination seriously to consider it. Let the House consider for a moment the practical working of the scheme. Here is an old person believed to be seventy years of age, who has led a reasonably industrious life, and has been told by hon. Gentlemen opposite that he has an absolute right to a pension. He makes his claim and some considerable time after the setting up of this machinery the pension officer arrives, very busy, his pocket bursting with birth and marriage certificates, and begins a most fantastic inquiry. He sits down in this wretched old person's room and proceeds to discover in the first place whether he is seventy years of age. We have asked the Government very politely and with great clearness what notion they themselves have formed of how in the ordinary course the old man is to be able to assure the pension officer that he has attained the age of seventy. They have not the faintest notion. He next inquires whether this old person has or has not resided for twenty years in the United Kingdom. That would exclude vast numbers of persons whom the Government do not desire to exclude—sailors and persons who might have gone abroad for any reason. The Attorney-General says, "That is all right. We will define residence to mean domicile." But he cannot do anything of the kind. Then the pension officer has to discover whether or not since January, 1908, the applicant has had an allowance—a few shillings during a week or two he has been out of work—from the guardians, and he then inquires into the habits of this unfortunate man during the whole of his life. He has to discover whether habitually he has worked according to his ability, his opportunity, and his need. It is made a great point by the Government that there is no character test in the Bill, that it is a matter of right and a reward for the industrious citizen, and that there is only an inquiry as to whether during the whole of the person's life he has or has not made the best use of his opportunity. Is there any ground for such a provision as that? The only gratification I have on considering it is that certainly if it were applied to any single member of the Government it would disqualify him for ever from receiving a pension. In the case of a woman this wretched officer will have to inquire and establish that she has habitually been a good housewife and has done her housework well for the benefit of those dependent upon her. That is a pure character test — it can be nothing else — and if the Government really believe what they asseverate so loudly, that there is no character test in the Bill, it can only be because they have not considered for a moment the meaning of the words which they employ. Industry is to be presumed if the applicant has paid into a trade union or friendly society continuously between the ages of fifty and sixty. These ten years are arbitrarily selected I suppose because they are the years during which it is most difficult for the applicant to continue his subscription. A man may have paid into a friendly society all his life up to the age of fifty-nine: it is no good. He may have paid from fifty-one to seventy. Industry in his case is not to be supposed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was rather moved in this matter, I understand, by the representations of the great friendly societies, who expressed very rightly, and with good reason, their apprehension as to the effect of the Bill upon their interests. He told them that they need not be alarmed, and that on the contrary the Bill would do them a great service, because they would be able to write on the head of their application form "Membership of this society is a guarantee for an old-age pension." The right hon. Gentleman of course believed what he said, but nobody who reads the Bill can fail to see at once that that is doubly misleading, and that any friendly society which took the Chancellor's advice would put itself in a very awkward position if anybody on the faith of that statement chose to begin payments to the society. When the friendly societies begin to read the Bill, they will see that they will have to write in large red letters on their application forms to the young men of the locality, "Join our society at the age of fifty and you will be presumed to have been industrious up to that time. All payments made to our society before the age of fifty will be useless for that purpose, and will probably result in your having made so good a provision for your old age yourself that you will be disqualified for an old-age pension altogether." Finally, the pension officer has to assure himself of the whole financial position—past, present, and future—of this wretched man. He has to have an absolute statement of the whole of the income which he has actually received last year in cash; every Christmas-box or charitable donation, all payments he may have received from his sons or his daughters or those who may desire to help him in his old age, will be brought up against him in order to defeat his claim. It is my firm belief that if Gentlemen below the gangway really understood the Bill they would not support it. The pension officer will also have to calculate the yield which any property the man possesses might be made to give if he were a skilled financier and investor, such as very few of us are or can hope to be. Finally, there is the ridiculous fact that if at the age of seventy a man inherits £800 and chooses to invest it in Consols so that it will bring in £20 a year he is entitled to a full pension, whereas if he inherits £200, and buys a Government annuity of £31 10s., he will be entitled to no pension at all.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I think he would be a fool to leave it in Consols when he could buy an annuity.

MR. BOWLES: That is because the hon. Member does not approve the system of depriving one's self of present advantages in order to be able to leave a little something for those who come after him. This Bill is represented as an endowment of the poor at the expense of the well-to-do. It is quite clear, unless this particular point is escaped somehow, that it will in a great many cases, in my belief, work out as an endowment of the well-to-do at the expense of the very poor. All these questions are to be put and answered. It is inevitable that the Bill will work with the most complete inequality in various localities. In one district you may have a strict pension officer and in another one who is less strict, and you have not the slightest guarantee that a man who has been refused a pension in one district will not succeed in getting it in another district. It seems to me that the inquiry provided for in the Bill is a most degrading and humiliating ordeal to put an old person through. Such an inquiry will be resented by all those who desire to preserve some spirit of independence and self-respect. In the country districts the Exciseman will have every single interest against him, for the landlord, the squire, the guardians, and the employers will form one gigantic conspiracy against this unfortunate Imperial officer, and the burden placed upon that man is more than he ought to be expected to bear. This Bill inevitably creates two new classes. In every village and town, on the one hand, you will have docketed the recipients of State charity, prevented by law from receiving any help from their sons or daughters, and they will be under the daily and weekly surveillance and control in every respect of a public official lingering out a subsidised old age with one eye upon the local post office and the other upon the Excise officer. On the other hand you will have a much larger army of persons who, after having submitted to this degrading and extremely painful inquiry, have failed to establish their claim. They will be thrown back upon the Poor Law where they will be deprived of the satisfaction of voting Tory for the rest of their lives. A scheme such as that is nothing else than an extension of outdoor relief on the part of the Poor Law, and no amount of rhetoric, no eloquent phrases, no hopes or wishes held out can make it anything else. It is pretended that this pension scheme has been carefully kept separate from the Poor Law. But no such separation is possible; and that seems to have been admitted, because as the Bill now stands, on the 1st of January, 1910, every single pauper will be thrown upon the Exchequer unless we amend the Poor Law. This fact alone justifies my Motion. It is admitted that the Poor Law must be amended and there is now a Commission sitting dealing with the whole question. We are told that on the Report of that Commission it may be found necessary to recast the whole of our Poor Law, and yet, in advance of the findings of that Commission, from motives which I do not think it would be offensive to say are motives prompted by mere party popularity, the Government, without the slightest warrant from anybody, bring forth this ill-considered scheme, which pre-judges the Report of the Commission now sitting and the action which the House will have to take upon it. Under these circumstances I do not wonder that when the

Cabinet sat round the table and considered this project as the Bill was first introduced into the House, they came to the conclusion that before the Second Reading was passed the House should be refused any opportunity to discuss it. Whether it is right or wrong it is a tremendous revolution in our procedure for the Government before the Second Reading of a Bill to draft and hand in a long Resolution confining the Committee stage to five days. We are now getting accustomed to the profound and avowed contempt with which the Government are pleased to treat the House. It seems to me that in this Bill they have passed even their own limit. It is not too much to say that in dealing with this Bill the House of Commons, as such, has been annihilated and treated as though it did not exist at all. I do not wish to exaggerate, but it is not too much to say that the debate upon this Bill has been unduly restricted. The Finance Bill of 1894, which made many important changes, was discussed for three months. But the Bill we are now considering is a far more important measure, and it appears to me that one session would not have been too much to devote to a Bill of this gigantic character. If the House of Commons is allowed to debate any Bill, however ridiculous it may be, it always, as a matter of fact, has been found capable of making that Bill a workable and a lasting measure. The Finance Act of 1894 raised subjects of great contention, but it has lasted to this day almost unamended. When the House debates under those circumstances, and when a measure is thoroughly discussed, the country and all parties are willing to abide by the decision. On the other hand surely hon. Members opposite must have seen that it always has been found that when closure is applied and debate forbidden the result is that you have an Act of Parliament which is not lasting, which does not settle the question at all, and which merely leads to trouble, difficulties, disappointment, and delusion, and necessitates more legislation upon the same subject, involving a further call upon the time of the House. The Government have stifled all discussion upon this gigantic Bill. Finally this Bill is said to be a financial and money Bill. It would be impossible to deny that it has a financial side, but I doubt very much myself whether in the opinion of a single hon. Member opposite, or in the opinion of any right hon. Gentleman sitting on the Treasury Bench, the financial side of the Bill is regarded as creditable to the Government or to this House. We have been told that all the estimates founded upon this Bill are purely conjectural. Whenever the Chancellor of the Exchequer opened his mouth in the discussion it generally involved an increase of anything from £500,000 to £1,000,000 in the cost of the scheme. I believe it to be a very mild estimate to say that the cost of the Bill will in the end approach a good deal nearer £10,000,000 than £7,000,000 or £8,000,000. Now £10,000,000 is a considerable sum, in fact it represents 4d. upon the income-tax, and remember, this is a proposal made by a Government which is pledged up to the eyes to the most vigilant retrenchment and economy. This is a scheme to which they were not pledged, and it will involve within the next few years not retrenchment or economy, but an additional expenditure of something like £10,000,000 per annum. It is a little surprising to me that a Government pledged to economy should come to this House and wantonly break those pledges in this way with their eyes wide open, and without any direct authority from anybody. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh."] The Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us that he has not the faintest conception where the money required for this scheme will come from. He has no nest egg, and therefore by the admission of the Government, so far from retrenchment or economy being possible, increased taxation of the heaviest kind is absolutely inevitable if this pension scheme is to be carried out. There are other considerations as to which I shall say nothing at the present moment. One of the most serious objections to this measure to my mind is the effect it will certainly have upon the purity and independence of public life in this country. I do not see how it is possible for anybody to suppose that once this system has been started every candidate at an election will not try to outbid his opponent. However, I put my objections to the measure upon much broader and more general grounds. The Bill imposes a degrading and humiliating ordeal upon people who deserve better treatment. It is a measure which has been entirely unconsidered by the Government, it has never been considered by the country, and the Government have not allowed it to be considered by the House of Commons. Whenever the measure has been attempted to be discussed it has soon been shown to be utterly unworkable. From the very nature of the case it cannot be regarded as a final scheme because it prejudges in an injurious way the consideration of the whole question. It lays for ever upon the whole of the taxpayers of this country a burden the limits of which are utterly unknown. For my part, with great confidence as to the reasonableness and the justice of my proposition, I earnestly invite the House to reject the Bill. I beg to move.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I rise to second the rejection of the Bill. It has been frequently said that those who are prepared to support the whole principle of the Bill are a negligible quantity. But looking beyond this House, and to those who have dealt longest with this question of old-age pensions—those who have spent their lives trying to devise some scheme for making old age easier than before—do not hon. Members see that the problem is one of difficulty and doubt, and that among those who are most capable of coming to a judgment on the proposals of this Bill you will not find that uniformity in favour of the measure which its supporters boast is to be found for it in this House? If that is a correct description of this House, then I am afraid the only conclusion we can draw is that the House does not represent the better part of the country—[Laughter, and cries of "Oh"]—or the more thinking part of the country. If my hon. friend below the gangway is content to say that no Member is worthy to represent his fellow citizens in this House, and is not worthy of being listened to by his fellow citizens if he entertains doubts as to the expediency of this Bill—if the hon. Member is prepared to say that the whole nation is at one, and that those who think otherwise are not worthy of representation in this House, I must take leave to differ from him. The hon. Member for Norwood has so completely disposed of the details involved in the working of the Bill, he has shown so amply and felicitously what doubts, difficulties, embarrassments, and harassments will surround its working, how doubtful the action of these local distributors will be, how difficult and how invidious the action of those who administer the scheme, how harassed those will be who look forward in their old age to having qualified for this very doubtful good by having fulfilled all the conditions, that I do not intend to enter upon that part of the question. I wish rather to deal with the principles which underlie this Bill. There are clearly two lines of action which might have been chosen. Those who have speculated on this question have put forward only two schemes which they consider fit to work, namely, a contributory scheme and a universal scheme. The Prime Minister set aside in a few words the contributory scheme in introducing the Budget, though the words which he then used have not received the slightest confirmation as the discussion of this Bill went on. A contributory scheme, the Prime Minister said, could not come into operation until after a long interval, and would be ludicrously inadequate and unjust, and yet he has never from that day to this made the slightest reference to the corrections of his reading of the German contributory scheme which were so ably put forward by the hon. Member for Preston. In fact the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself in express words set aside the whole of the argument of the Prime Minister; he argued gravely that because all citizens more or less contributed to the taxes, therefore this was a contributory scheme, and that he could defend it as such. I would like the House to note another peculiar symptom in the passage of this Bill. If I am not mistaken, hon. Members below the gangway have in their constituencies frequently indicated—I understand it was part of the platform on which they stood—that the old-age pension scheme ought to be universal. [AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.] Yes, but what are we to think of an alliance struck between the Treasury and hon. Members below the gangway, who hold diametrically opposite views, and yet who kept carefully silent on this principle and went into the lobby in support of the Bill? I myself on the first clause of the Bill moved an Amendment which would not have bound us with regard to any limitations, but which would simply have left our hands freer to prevent those limitations continuing during the whole course of the tenure of a pension, and what was the result? It did not suit the Treasury bench that such a principle should be added. It was contrary to the interests of their Bill, and I had not one word of support from hon. Members below the gangway, although I was speaking in favour of proposals which they have always advocated. A Bill which is based on what I shall not scruple to describe as an unsound and dishonest alliance as this Bill is——

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): If you want our support, it will not be got by calling us dishonest.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK: I am speaking of the alliance between two Parties who hold totally different principles, who join in support of a Bill which only represents one set of those principles and flouts the other set. The hon. Member will not think that I am imputing anything dishonourable to himself in describing that as a dishonest alliance and not a sincere one. But as the hon. Member for Norwood has so fully dealt with the details of the Bill and shown how unworkable they are, I wish to call the attention of the House to one or two general principles which it contains. Is it consistent with the previous action of Parliament? Parliament moves forward according to certain principles, and at all events the Party to which the present Government belongs claims to act upon certain principles, and to develop these on some consistent grounds. It was the Liberal Party which seventy years ago re-cast the Poor Law in the interest of the poorer classes and society generally. No Member of the House would deny that since the Act of 1834 was passed the most enlightened, the most advanced, those most interested in raising the position of the poor in this country, have tried to administer the law according to the principles embodied in that Act. That is a common-place of those who have studied the economics of this country. In the last seventy years new conditions and changed problems have come up, and a Commission has been appointed whose investigations are to be the basis for a revisal of the Act of 1834, to ascertain whether the principles which were then established require modification, which must be based on a broad survey of the whole matter. What are you doing now? That Commission is on the eve of reporting, and according to your own confession you must, when it has reported, deal with the whole question on some sound principle. You thrust into this troubled and vexed area a new principle never established before in this country, which is variously described by those below the gangway as the right of every citizen to reward for work done for his country, and by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War as a mere extension of the Poor Law principle. You place this scheme before the country on the eve of changes so stupendous as those which are to be undertaken when the Commission has reported. We have been tired to death by the constant reiteration of an example which has been held up to us as the one thing which we must follow, namely, the example of New Zealand, which has a territory as large as Great Britain and a population about the size of a provincial town. Is that to be the sort of example we are to follow? Does the action of that Colony embody the wisdom which is to guide this country in what it is to do in meeting the needs of an old civilisation based upon old traditions? Are we to take the example of this Colony which has none of the vast and difficult problems which have to be dealt with in such a country as this? Are we to have this thing foisted upon us, breaking in upon the development of our Poor Law which has been developed from age to age on a consistent principle? But there is another proof of inconsistency of principle in this matter. I have had myself a good deal of experience in the getting hold of charitable endowments to be used for education. The Party opposite have been never tired for the last generation in telling us of the absolute wickedness and degradation of those doles and pensions given out of charity, and that the proper thing is to take these away and employ them on education. Act of Parliament after Act of Parliament may be credited to the Party opposite which has expressly for its object the destruction and the confiscation of those charitable endowments on the ground that they were injurious to the poor, that they bred poverty rather than relieved it, and effecting the transference of those charitable endowments to educational purposes. I think the Party opposite sometimes proceeded with extreme rigour, and almost tyrannical urgency. But it is certainly not for that Party which has cut down in many cases the pensions of the poor to plead that they are acting consistently in proposing the re-establishment of a vast system of doles which differ only from the Poor Law in the fact that they are subject to certain very harassing conditions from which the Poor Law is exempt. I would like some hon. Members of the Party opposite who have made themselves prominent in diverting these charitable endowments to tell us how they reconcile their action in recent years with the present Bill. There is another consideration I ask the House to remember. Do you think that if you establish pensions of this sort of £13 a year, which will raise the income of some 600,000 or 700,000 persons up to the level of about £30 per annum—that you can do that without serious injury to a vast number of people who have themselves saved only a little more than that sum? Is it not one of the plainest inferences of political economy that if you vastly increase the number of those people who hold a certain income, you reduce inevitably the buying power of that income? Do you think that men who by painful effort have collected for their old age a provision of £30, £35, or £40 a year—I know many such whom I am proud to consider friends of mine, who strongly prize and value their independence—will not be injured by this Bill? What hon. Member will venture to gainsay my proposition that the provision which these men have made for their old age will be proportionally lowered in its buying value by the vast number whom you bring up to the level to which they have attained? If you once establish 700,000 or 800,000 people who are prepared to bid against those who previously had all they required in the way of decent lodging, do you think that the price of that lodging will not rise? By refraining from giving any benefit to this enormous class of thrifty persons who have made their own provision for old age, you are not only depriving them of that benefit, but you are unquestionably handicapping them by proportionally lowering the purchasing value of their means. I ask the House to look at the fact that this Bill is not merely not the beneficial Bill you pretend it is; but that it will inflict upon a vast number of people an injury the extent of which you can hardly guess. I will not deal with the question of finance. That duty has been undertaken by the hon. Member for Norwood. I was, however, struck in this respect with another curious symptom of the strange alliance between the Treasury Bench and hon. Members below the gangway. I would not myself say that the resources of this great country are unequal to meet any real unanswerable need or that our national resources are so limited that our hands must be tied in dealing with what should be a great national system of old-age pensions; but we were told time after time by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the sole necessity for modifying the Bill was that he could not find the money. That this country could not find the necessary additional £300,000, £400,000 or £500,000! That was a reasonable excuse, perhaps, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make, but what I am astonished at is that the champions of the working classes followed the right hon. Gentleman into the lobby and assented to that principle. They did not raise their voices in aid of the proposals to increase the benefits granted by the Bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: We had not the opportunity.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK: The hon. Member admits the restrictions imposed on discussion by the Treasury Bench. The evil of these restrictions is now seen. Hon. Members now admit that they had many points to make, if they had had the chance to expose the merciless side of the Bill, and to minimise the restrictions upon the grant of a pension, but that they were not allowed to do so. Those who were in honest alliance with them told them to hold their tongues, and they obeyed. I have attacked this Bill because, instead of a kindness, it inflicts upon many of the poorer classes of this country a very serious injury; because it handicaps those who have made thrift the object of their life, and were proud of that thrift;

and because those who draw a miserable pittance from this Bill will find their lives subjected to new and harrassing conditions and disagreeable inspection of which they have enough already. Still more, I object to the Third Reading of this Bill, because I believe it is the beginning of a course of legislative action which will more and more taint the fountain of politics in this country. I do not think we have to go beyond the discussions that have taken place in the House to see that there will be in the future—it requires no prophet's vision to see it—a rush to go one better than the opposite Party, to bait the hook a little more strongly in the hope of catching plausibly a little more support. I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now' in order to insert the words 'upon this day three months.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

*Sir HENRY NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.): I have heard over a considerable period of years many grave measures introduced into this House, and, on the eve of passing through, their rejection moved by some member of the party in opposition; but I cannot recall an example when the seriousness and indeed solemnity of the subject was in such marked and painful contrast to what the hon. Member for Norwood must forgive me if I call the flippancy of the speech in which he moved the rejection of this Old-Age Pensions Bill. The hon. Member said that he would be probably charged with indifference and callousness to the sufferings of the poor. I do not suppose that anyone who knows the hon. Member would charge him with callousness, but I think it is quite easy to imagine what will be said in the House and what will be thought in the country if he and his friends really go into the lobby against the Bill. He said that the debates were ridiculous and truncated. It may be fairly retorted that if they are ridiculous they have been made so by such criticism as he and his friends on the Opposition benches have made; if they have been truncated, it is because the time allotted to them has been occupied by obstruction—[OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh."] Well, if there are objections to the use of the phrase I will alter it. If these debates have been truncated it is largely because the time has been needlessly cut short by discussions on entirely frivolous and formal points. It will also be said here and outside that for twenty years during which the party to which the hon. Gentleman belongs were in power, often with large surpluses, they made no effort to solve in this House the question of the aged poor. During ten years formal promises were given by the party opposite to deal with the subject, and nothing was done. An hon. friend of mine said of another Bill that such criticism as comes from your side is the old story—"Not thus," and "Not now." But that "now" of the Unionist party on the question of old-age pensions lasted for twenty years, and the "Not thus," is this Bill which is on the eve of passing into law. The hon. Member said that it had been introduced by the Government, and they were prepared to spend nine or ten millions of money on it, merely in order to be able to say that they had dealt with the question. I think I shall have the support of both sides of the House when I say that that is a kind of criticism which Members of the House of Commons do not regard with approval. The hon. Member said that the subject had not been dealt with fully, finally, and justly. That is quite true; it has not been dealt with finally and fully, nor does the Bill meet all the demands of abstract justice. If it has not been dealt with finally, at least it has been dealt with temporarily. If it has not been dealt with fully, an honest attempt has been made to deal with it partially. If not perfectly satisfactory at all points, at any rate it is such an instalment as was possible to the Government and party which has undertaken it. If the case against the Bill is all that is said by the hon. Member for Norwood, then there is no need for much to be said in its defence. The hon. Gentleman's ability is well-known, and his eloquence not infrequent, but if all that can be produced against the Bill is his thin stream of feeble argumentation, punctuated by his own gay laughter, then the Bill must rest on a firmer foundation even than I had thought. I am tempted to regret that these benches, which are now so partially peopled by Members of the House of Commons, are not crowded with old men and women who are to be provided with these old-age pensions, so that they might have heard what the hon. Gentleman and his seconder said, and have seen for themselves the attitude of the Unionist Party towards this great hope which has come to them in the evening of their days. Everyone on this side of the House saying a few words on this Bill at this stage will, I am sure, wish to give expression to his admiration and gratitude to the Government which has at last attempted to deal with this matter. After all the examples of promises not kept, hopes held out and not fulfilled for so many years, this pledge honestly given and honourably kept, will, I am certain, assure to the Prime Minister the added loyalty of his supporters, and I am confident the gratitude of the large majority of his fellow citizens. Having said this, and having supported the Bill through every stage, I may now frankly refer to one or two matters of detail, and here, if I may refer once more to the Member for Norwood, I may say that with regard to one of the questions he raised, the aspect of the Bill as it affects annuities, his figures were wrong. A careful study of the Bill reveals a number of anomalies doubtless inevitable, but certainly startling. I do not believe it is possible in a Bill dealing with this subject for the first time, and entering so far into the land of the unknown, to escape all anomalies, to avoid all absurdities, or to prevent all hard cases. One of these anomalies I call attention to, which I think is not unamusing. I do so in no carping spirit, but because it leads up to a point upon which the Government must be prepared to act administratively before the 1st of January next. A man who has £739 invested in Consols will receive a pension of 5s. a week, and a man who has nothing invested in Consols will also receive a pension of 5s. a week. This raises the much-debated question of thrift, and I may say here that I hear with impatience such utterances as those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon on this question. For us, with our smart clothes, our luxurious houses, and our motor cars, to preach thrift to a man who is bringing up his family respectably, or trying to, on £1 a week, seems to me to be not only bad taste, but a positive affront. I by no means join in deprecating the saving for investment criticised by my hon. friend the Member for Tyneside, believing his view to be based upon an economic fallacy, but I have not been able to bring myself to a definite conviction on the question of thrift as it applies to this Bill. Should a man with £739 invested in Consols receive more because he has been thrifty, or should the poor man who has nothing receive more because his need is the greater? It seems obvious that the two do not occupy the same position towards the State. I incline to think the man of seventy years of age, who has nothing, deserves more as his need is more. But the anomaly grows greater the more we look at it. The man with £739 invested in Consols will receive 5s. a week, the man with £831 invested 4s., the man with £915, 3s., the man with £1,016, 2s., and the man with £1,108, 1s. a week. My own view has rather been that I preferred the Bill in its original form than the Bill including this sliding scale. But let me carry this a little further. A man and his wife, both over seventy years of age, living together, can be possessed of £1,478 8s. invested in Consols, and receive 10s. a week from the State, and they can actually have £2,217 12s. in Consols and receive 2s. a week from the State. Out of this situation arises a curious and not uninteresting conundrum. This old couple satisfy the pension officer that they have £2,217 in Consols which bring in 12s. a week, and they are therefore entitled to a pension of 2s. But during the first year they spend £184 16s. of their capital, thus adding £3 11s. per week to their income, making it about £4 2s. in all. By doing so they have retrospectively and in anticipation disqualified themselves for a pension, both for that which they had, and that for next year. But at the end of the year they have only £1,016 invested in Consols, bringing in 11s. 1d. a week, and they become entitled therefore to 4s. a week pension. What is the State going to do about it? Is it going to say, "If you keep your capital intact we will give you a pension, but if you spend any of it we will not give you any more, and will take back what we gave you before?" Supposing this old couple have a royal good time with their £2,217 until all is gone, and they become destitute, will the State pension them if their lives have been exemplary? If the State pensions them after thus squandering their money, obviously it does it at the expense of other taxpayers. If, on the other hand, it does not pension them, then the scheme for which we have voted is a contributory and not a non-contributory one. I venture to recommend the puzzle to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But that is not all. A man of seventy with £739 4s. invested in Consols is entitled to 5s. a week. But for £269 8s. 3d. he can purchase himself a Post Office annuity of 13s., and still have £459 invested, which will bring him in £13 17s. a year, which raises his income to 18s. 4d. a week. Will the State give a pension to a man who has thus sufficient means to ensure himself 18s. 4d. a week, and in addition has an invested capital of £450; or if not, will the State compel every man who has money invested to buy himself an annuity and thus disqualify himself for a pension? This question requires a mostserious answer. As the Bill stands, a man of seventy, with £247 1s. 11d. can purchase an annuity of 12s. and receive 1s. a week from the State. But if he is an old man of unscrupulous character he can do what he likes with £80 of it. He can invest it in a horse race and if he loses he will be no worse off than before. The point is one which I put forward in all seriousness on this question of purchasable annuities, and it must be decided before 1st January next. Is the man who can purchase an annuity to be compelled by the State to do so, or not? That is the question. Leaving these details of the Bill, I return for an instant only to its principles. I welcome the Bill most cordially, and I am proud to march in the ranks of the party which has put this landmark into our political history, but my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will not think my tribute less cordial because I welcome the Bill as an instalment, as one story of an edifice, one movement in a great campaign. This is clearly a problem which cannot be dealt with completely until the Poor Law Commission reports. Very few Governments would have had the courage to tackle this question, and relieve the aged poor, without waiting for the Report. A man getting outdoor relief in his need, owing to his worthiness, is penalised, and if it be for only two or three years, to a man of seventy that may mean for the rest of his life. That is one shortcoming of the Bill, but there is another as to which there is no comfort in the shape of a time limit. The old age of a worker is not to be measured by years. The agricultural labourer may be a hale and hearty man at seventy, but the man who works in a steel works or in a chemical factory may be old at fifty. Against accident the worker has been insured by the action also of this Government; but against old age, except in the matter of years, he was not. Old age comes on a host of workers much earlier, except in the years by which it is measured, than seventy, and great pressure will be brought to bear on the Government perhaps to increase the pension but certainly to lower the age. But no extension of the Bill on its present lines can meet the whole of the cases. It is quite impossible for the State to find enough money to take charge of all that ought to be done in this way. If the Bill were extended to give every man a pension of 10s. a week at sixty, a great army of workers would still be left out of its scope. The goal will never be reached until the workers are secured against the disability of old age at whatever time and from whatever cause it arises. It would pass the wit of man, even the wit of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which, in this matter, passes the wit of many, to deal with it except by a contributory system—not to supersede, but to supplement this system. To regard the Bill, however it may be extended in the future, as a final one, seems to me to be the counsel of despair. It shows a willingness to stereotype the economic system under which the worker does not get a sufficient share of the proceeds of his own labour to enable him to make provision for his old age. I hold personally that the worker should receive such a share of what he himself produces that he will be able to provide for himself; in other words, that he should be paid higher wages. Then his own contribution and his employers' contribution, with the assistance of the State, all of which he will justly deserve, will provide him a pension whenever he becomes old. We look forward, and I do not think, knowing him as we do, that we shall look in vain, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer formulating in due course, and submitting to this House, such a scheme supplementing the present Bill, as will have the result that, while every worker shall have a final refuge under this Bill, other workers in ever-increasing numbers may be able, with assistance justly due to them, to secure a refuge from the sorrows and humiliations of poverty, whenever and from whatever cause actual old age shall come upon them. I have criticised the Bill; I have ventured to put a small number of questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I have expressed a hope. Let my last word, as was my first, be an expression of the pride that I am sure we all feel, that in connection with this scheme we have been allowed to take our part, even in the humblest way, in the great work which the Government has so nobly taken in hand, of putting on the Statute-book a measure which will be held in grateful memory as long as our political records shall endure.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I sincerely hope that the Government themselves will find in the course of this debate some supporter whose support will be of a little more valuable character than that which they have received from the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken. The hon. Member, is of course entitled to give the opinion—it is very kind of him to do so—which he and his friends hold of their opponents. I do not know, after a somewhat long electoral experience, that I should be inclined to attach very much importance to the opinion which hon. Gentlemen opposite hold of their opponents, but it is always useful to know it in advance, because it enables us to make our preparations. When we know what he and his hon. friends will say about us in the country, we shall naturally be better able to meet those statements when they are made. The hon. Gentleman wandered away into the region of prophecy. I should have thought that he was sufficiently astute-minded to realise that there have been certain indications of what the people outside the House think, and on the whole I am more inclined to trust the evidence of the electors when a direct appeal is made to them, than the experience of a Member of the House who in the earlier part of his remarks sought more to disparage the Opposition than to argue in favour of the Bill. It is absurd to try to establish the proposition that if a scheme is submitted of which you do not approve altogether, or of which you strongly disapprove, you are to be compelled to vote for it; and that you cannot even criticise it without laying yourselves open to the charge of being altogether hostile to the measure. What was the line that the hon. Gentleman took upon a previous occasion in this House, when many of the Gentlemen opposite sat on this side of the House? I have a very lively recollection of the action taken by those who were then His Majesty's Opposition when discussing the question of the machinery for dealing with the unemployed. All the arguments on which the hon. Gentleman now pours such contempt were used with the greatest freedom by the then Opposition, though not by members on the Labour benches. The whole Liberal Party used these very arguments on which they now pour such ridicule. They said they were in favour of machinery for dealing with the unemployed, but not now; that this was the worst thing they could possibly do, and that they would do their best to prevent legislation of that kind from passing. Not so the Labour Party, who, although they disapproved of it, would not vote against it, because they believed it was something which might be made useful. It is ridiculous of the hon. Gentleman to argue, either as to his own Party, or on the merits of the question, that those who criticise the Bill, or even those, who like my hon. friends behind me, have announced throughout their opposition to the measure, or those who object to its form and its details, are therefore altogether opposed to the granting of pensions. For my part, I anticipate with absolute equanimity the levelling of these charges by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and if I wanted consolation I should find it in this conviction, which I hold very strongly, that long before the time comes for hon. Gentlemen to begin to level those charges against us, they will themselves be as busily concerned, as they desire to see us, in defending themselves against the charges which can be brought against them in relation to some of the ridiculous provisions of this measure. The hon. Gentleman, after his repeated references to the Opposition, passed to the Bill, and then he became really interesting. He said he was now coming to the Bill, and he poured blessings on the head of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which

I hope the right hon. Gentleman will find as agreeable as blessings can be when they are given in that way, because the blessing of the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway took the form which is very prevalent in this country; it was much more gratitude for favours to come than for those already received. The hon. Gentleman said it was only an instalment, a step in the right direction, one story of a mighty edifice which the Goverment had got to build; and then he went on to indicate to the Government what kind of edifice it should be, and I wish joy to the Chancellor of the Exchequer or Minister in charge who attempts to carry out the programme of the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. I think it will take them all their time, and all the wit which the hon. Member very rightly attributed to the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. The hon. Gentleman then proceeded to deal with the Bill, and the rest of his remarks were criticisms of a most destructive character. I have sat through the whole of these debates from the very beginning up to the present time. I think I have heard nearly all the speeches through the Second Reading, Committee, and Report stages, and I have heard no speech more destructive of the Bill in its application to the cause of old-age pensions than that delivered by the hon. Gentleman. Let it be remarked that the speech was delivered when it was too late even for the Government to give effect to the hon. Gentleman's suggestions, or to amend the Bill in the directions which he indicated. I do not hesitate to say that if the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman be that the Government are to carry out the alterations by means of regulations—and I only assume that because he said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Local Government Board would have to deal with this question before the 1st of January next—if the suggestion is deliberately made that this Bill is to be altered, in regard to the principles which underlie it, by means of regulations of Departments, I am quite satisfied that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Local Government Board will repudiate any such suggestion as being one which they could not possibly in any event have anything to do with.

*SIR H. NORMAN: I made no such suggestion whatever. I only mentioned that possibly the Government might take up that attitude, and instruct the pension officers as to what they had to do under this Bill.

MR. WALTER LONG: But the difficulties which the hon. Gentleman pointed out are inherent in the provisions of the Bill passed through Parliament, and the suggestion which he has just made is that the Government are to give instructions to the pension officers to avoid those difficulties. But, then, they would be instructions to evade the law which Parliament had made.

*SIR H. NORMAN: I have not suggested that they should do anything of the kind. The Government would have to state what their attitude was. If one class of action is contrary to the principles of the Bill, as the right hon. Gentleman says, and possibly he is right, then of course the Government need not instruct the officers in that sense. I am not suggesting that any instructions should be given which were opposed to the principle of the Bill, but only that they should state what was to be done under certain circumstances.

MR. WALTER LONG: I do not wish to misrepresent the hon. Gentleman, but if that is all his suggestion amounts to, then for the life of me I cannot see why he made his speech on this stage of the Bill at all, because the suggestion he made was that you are to point out the difficulties which have already been pointed out, both in Committee and on Report. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself has frankly admitted that these inconsistencies do exist. He says—"Well now, we cannot help some of these difficulties, and we must put up with them." If the hon. Gentleman did not mean to suggest that they should be overcome by regulations, then I can only say that his speech amounts to wholesale criticism of the Bill, made at a time when it is too late to give effect to it, and when the Government themselves could not fill up the cracks which the hon. Gentleman has pointed out as existing in the measure. My hon. friend the Member for Norwood, who has moved the rejection of the Bill, holds strongly, and has said repeatedly during the debates, that the provisions of this Bill are so unsatisfactory that he is not prepared to support them. It is suggested that we are not prepared to make these statements in our constituencies. It is rather absurd to make this suggestion now that we have gone through something like three months' debates on the Bill, and after speeches like that made by my hon. friend have been delivered, not only in this House, but throughout the country. I can safely state that I have not said a word of criticism on this Bill, which I have been compelled to criticise a good deal, that I have not said on one or two occasions when I have had an opportunity of speaking in the country, and that I am not prepared to repeat at any meeting which I may be called upon to attend at any time. The hon. Gentleman said he would like to see a contributory scheme. When this Bill was going through the Second Reading stage I ventured to put before the House what I believed to be the ideal and best way to deal with the question. I am not going to repeat it now, but I simply reaffirm my view—that is, a contributory scheme with the aid of friendly societies plus a scheme like the one we are now considering. If you had a contributory scheme as a foundation for your proposals for the future all you would need would be a scheme to bridge over the time between the present and the coming into operation of the contributory scheme, and that would have necessitated none of those restrictions which you have put into the Bill, and which will, I am convinced, prove great stumbling-blocks to the administration of this measure. I did not oppose the Second Reading, and I am not going to oppose the Third Reading. I make a present to Gentlemen opposite of the argument—a perfectly fair one in party warfare—that we could not oppose the Bill and then face our constituents. I believe there are in this Bill a great many grave inconsistencies and many clauses which will prove stumbling-blocks rather than advantages to those who are to get pensions. But I have no hesitation in voting for it, because I believe these limitations to which the hon. Member for Wolverhampton has drawn attention will be swept away wholesale by those who administer the Act locally. If you had a contributory scheme and a scheme bridging over the intervening period none of these difficulties would arise, and you would then give in reality what you are only now giving in form, namely, a pension to everybody as a right, upon attaining a certain age, and not as a result of fulfilling certain arbitrary conditions. The hon. Gentleman dealt in scathing terms with the suggestion of people having sums of money in stockings or hidden away in some remote chimney corner, but I do not think that the House need trouble itself very much about it if here and there a man is given a pension who happens to have a few shillings saved up in a corner. The most effective and damaging criticism of the Bill—and I do not urge it from any party point of view, but because I believe now is the time to lay down clearly what we think ought to be the guiding principles in a measure of this kind—is that instead of going upon contributory lines you are really extending and generally applying what is known as the charity organisation work throughout the country. The Charity Organisation Society has done noble work and I should be the last to say a word against it. On the other hand, it might have done even more had it not been for the almost inevitable fact that people resent bitterly, and resist if they can, any demand made by its officers, and agents to inquire into their past lives; the poor hate nothing so much as this. I regret more than I can describe that it has been necessary, in the opinion of the Government, to put in this Bill a clause which casts upon the pension officer. and therefore to some extent upon the pension committee, the duty of making this inquiry, which in some cases will result undoubtedly in the disclosure of unfortunate circumstances long ago forgotten. And after all, are not these pension officers and committees placed in positions which the ordinary individual is hardly competent to fill? They are asked to say, in the case of a man who has done his best according to his needs and his opportunities, whether his life has been generally satisfactory, and how far he has conformed to the pension officers' and pension committees' idea of what is right. Are there many men in this House who would like to perform the duty which we thrust upon the pension officers? We may be the most faithful watch dogs of public expenditure—we are fruitful in speeches on the subject, though I do not think we do much in actual action—but outside this House we know perfectly well that the ordinary man takes very little interest in the amount of public expenditure either under the head of taxes or of rates. We may make eloquent speeches to them from our respective points of view, but the response is not a very practical one. The pension officer will not be in any way liable for the expenditure, and your control over him is of the slenderest kind. He is employed by the Inland Revenue Department, but his connection with the Treasury is of the remotest description. All he knows of his real masters is his communication with the supervisor at the head of his district. The pension committee can have no earthly object in restricting the grant of these pensions. What will they do? Will they not take the view that these conditions if they are strictly interpreted will be harsh and cruel, and say, "It is our business not to put strict interpretation upon them, but to treat these cases in the most generous way. What business is it of ours that thirty years ago this man did not make as big an effort as he ought to have made to earn a living for himself, or did not join a friendly society and make provision for his old age, or got into bad society and adopted loose and intemperate habits? All we know is that for ten years he has been working hard, and is now a poor man and cannot maintain himself." If Parliament meant these things to be done they should have laid the performance of them on other shoulders. I feel confident that all these restrictions, which I believe are unwise restrictions which it would be practically impossible for the local committees or the pension officers to carry out, will be swept away, and the result will be that practically the people who attain the age and fulfil the general conditions will in every case get their pensions. I do not regret it. That is what would have happened under a scheme which formed part of a contributory scheme. It is what would happen under a contributory scheme where every man's right to a pension depended solely on his contributions to the general fund. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton said we had been in office for 20 years, and had had abundant surpluses, but had not dealt with this question. I admit that that charge can be brought against us, but during the whole time I was at the Local Government Board I never found any scheme put before me which would stand these tests and limitations; I felt convinced that they would be swept away; and I believe the result of this measure will be that before it has been three years in operation the expenditure under it will be nearly double the amount the Government have estimated. Then what about the effect of the Bill upon Poor Law Reform? I have been ever since I entered the House a very ardent supporter of a reform of the Poor Law, and I frankly admit that the present Government appear in a new form in regard to this question, because in past days we found it very difficult to enlist their sympathy. But undoubtedly this measure will indirectly, but to an increasing amount, relieve local expenditure by casting on the taxes what has hitherto been borne by the rates. That is altogether satisfactory, and as a local taxation reformer I welcome it. But that is not all. If the matter ended there I should be content. The hon. Gentleman below the gangway said he thought the Government were brave to step in and deal with this question now before the Report of the Commission. It would be grossly impertinent for me to suggest that it has been said that some people step in where others fear to tread. It may have been brave to step in, but I think it was rather like rashness. After all, what is the Royal Commission going to report upon but the very question with which you are dealing in this Bill? In the rural and urban districts the operation of this measure and the form of the Poor Law maintained must vary. The classes of people that you have in the workhouses and infirmaries are totally different. In the rural districts the workhouses practically contain nobody but those who are infirm or so broken in health that they cannot be looked after outside. The average country workhouse is really an infirmary and not a workhouse at all, and as a matter of fact we know that four out of five of the people who are given relief in rural districts are given it in their own homes. That means that you have got now throughout the country a large number of people who get sums varying from 3s. to 5s. a week as outdoor relief. Undoubtedly these people will pass from the Poor Law on to the pension list, and to that extent it will be a relief to local charges. But the hon. Member takes comfort from the knowledge that under this Bill there must be an amending Bill before 1st January, 1910. Poor Law reform was very difficult before, but it has been made much more difficult by the way this Bill has been framed. In the future you will have these old people coming on the pension list by troops. Boards of guardians will be compelled, because they have no alternative, to grant relief which will disqualify a person after the 1st January, 1910. They will consequently strain every effort to make some other provision so that they may not be disqualified. Consequently you will have these old men and women receiving pension relief almost universally. The Royal Commission was appointed to inform the House how it was possible to discriminate between these cases. It is well known that in many cases people remain out of the workhouse and in their own houses. Those people, often suffering from infirmities, will become pensioners, and it will be difficult for any Government to go back from that form of relief, and divide into the two classes in which they will probably be divided by the recommendation of the Poor Law Commission. Then there is the effect which this Bill will have upon the question of Poor Law reform. I profoundly regret that the Government thought it necessary to restrict our debates on this measure by the closure. I am certain there is no one who has studied Poor Law questions who will deny that since the great Poor Law Reform Act of 1834 no Bill of more lasting importance to social reform in this country has ever been brought before Parliament than the one the Third Reading of which we are now considering. There are many hon. Gentlemen opposite who, if they were in the Palace of Truth, and had the obligation of party discipline removed, would be ready to admit that there are many suggestions they would have been glad to make while this Bill was passing through Parliament, and who would agree that their experience and knowledge would have helped the Government to make this a more complete measure. They must feel as I feel that many parts of this measure have been dangerously hurried through. In a Bill which so closely affects the lives and happiness of millions of our fellow subjects, and will throw duties of the most difficult and responsible character on those who have to administer it, it is a remarkable fact that in many parts it will receive its final assent without any discussion in the House of Commons, and even with important parts not discussed. I take note of the extraordinary change made on the Motion of a private Member which, for the first time, enabled the Government to do what, so far, no other Government has ever done before, namely, not merely to pledge the finances of their possible successors, but also the time and arrangements of their possible successors. That is a reckless as well as a novel proceeding. This Bill is full of weak points, but I think they will be overcome by the common-sense of those who have to administer the Act, and in that way they will be swept away. I profoundly regret that the Government did not see their way to introduce a contributory scheme in conjunction with this one, for that would have laid the foundations more securely. The Bill, as it stands, in my humble opinion, is very crude, but I shall certainly do nothing to risk its passage through Parliament, although I shall watch its workings not only with interest but with anxiety. For my own part, however, I shall do my best to help the Act when it has been passed to work satisfactorily. I look upon the future with great anxiety, because I believe this Bill will create new troubles and add new difficulties to those already existing in the Poor Law. I am confident that the Government in the near future will have to legislate again on this subject, because without fresh legislation you will have complications arising so serious that it will be difficult for either the guardians or the pension committees to do their work properly. Many of us feel very deeply the truth of our criticisms, and we also feel that great hopes and expectations have been raised in the hearts of thousands of people. I firmly realise that Parliament without restriction of party has made to those people a promise that the darkness of their lives shall be brightened, and it would be a most serious step to do anything now to retard the fulfilment of that hope, even though we may entertain a strong conviction that this same privilege and blessing might have been conferred in a more satisfactory manner.

Pensions Bill. The spending departments of the country—one of which I have for the moment the honour to represent in this House this afternoon—are pressing the Treasury for as much money as it can see its way to give, and which we reckon we have a right to demand; and in the consideration of this scheme the question is not whether the Treasury ought to be able to promise more money—that is a question of finance—but whether, the Treasury having declared that it sees its way to furnish this particular amount, we are making it go as far as possible in the promotion of the social amelioration and welfare of the classes we desire to assist through some such pension scheme as this. There have been repeated this afternoon some of the criticisms of the limitations which are inevitable if the £16,000,000 to £25,000,000 required for a complete scheme is to be reduced to £7,000,000 or £8,000,000, which is the only amount the Treasury see fit to provide. There was the Amendment proposed by my hon. friend in favour of the reduction of the age limit. We are all in favour academically of a reduction in the age limit. We do not wish to deprive old men and old women at the age of sixty or sixty-five of pensions, and, instead of giving pensions then, to leave them till they reach the age of seventy, but for the fact that we have not the money to do it. There is the question of the income limit, and the anomaly which immediately arises, as was pointed out by my hon. friend the Member for Wolverhampton. I disagree with one of his statements as to the superiority of the fixed limit over the sliding scale. Our sliding scale has been criticised, but I think it is the one almost universally adopted, because it gives an advantage to thrift—at least it does not penalise thrift — whereas any scheme which starts at a fixed limit makes it absolutely desirable for men and women who have saved a certain amount to fling their money down drains, or get some one to relieve them of it like the millionaire in a certain popular play, so that by getting rid of 1s. they might get 5s. a week extra. That is the reason for making a sliding scale. There is the pauper limit, which, in the general view of the House—though there is a division of opinion on its merits—is to be reconsidered, and probably abandoned, in the immediate future. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin as to the importance of the Poor Law considerations which he put before the House, and it would be tempting to offer some observations on them were it not that I desire to confine myself for the moment entirely to the Bill; but I may say one thing. I think he will agree with me that the question of old-age pensions was outside the scope of the reference to the Poor Law Commission. It is a question of policy far more than of actual facts, and if the report of the Poor Law Commission had been on the question of policy against giving pensions, I do not think it would have influenced the Government in going forward with this question. I agree that there will have to be careful consideration both of local finance and of discrimination directly we come to deal with the Report of the Commission as a whole, and as one who wishes to see the immediate treatment of the Poor Law, and has feared that it might be squeezed out in the natural pressure of business in favour of other and more popular questions—more popular with the electors—I rejoice that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has bound himself down to so rigorous a time-limit. May I point out to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin that in his appeal for discrimination in regard to the pauper clause in the Bill, which he says will be necessary directly the paupers are considered as a whole, he is back again to the inevitable closed circle of tests and inquiries which in the earlier part of his speech he denounced in such unmeasured terms with the entire agreement of the House. No one wants tests and inquiries. We would like the tests and inquiries which are applied to be automatic, and we would like the inquiries to be conducted certainly in a different fashion from that spectre which he held out to the House amid universal disapprobation. But whatever scheme is established I do not quite see how the question of age which the hon. Member for Norwood raised is to be got rid of. Whatever limitations are established—whether it is any kind of industrial test, the working of which in practice we shall have to watch most carefully, or whether it be the test of income, immediately you leave your universal system and make your age limit, you must have some kind of inquiry, some kind of inquisition, some kind of machinery, provided for the carrying out of this work, and I believe I can say sincerely that you must get back practically to the same kind of machinery which is established in this Bill. That leads me to the reiteration of the criticism of a few days back admirably expressed by the hon. Member for Norwood, concerning the machinery which is being set up in connection with these pensions. The machinery is the obvious machinery which, on first consideration, you would come to in connection with the matter, and which, I am confident, you would come to on the last consideration also. There was an impression a few days back that we had devised some specially difficult apparatus to be conducted by specially inefficient pension officers in order to extort large amounts from the Treasury, or to impose unnatural conditions on the old people demanding pensions. There is to be an Imperial officer for the protection of the Treasury in the giving out of public money, a local pension committee appointed under the widest possible conditions, and finally a court of appeal in the Local Government Board That is the minimum of simple machinery which any pension scheme can provide for dealing with this particular question. Of course, if you assume that every Imperial pension officer is a knave, that every pension committee is made up of fools, and that every Court of Appeal in a Government Department is both inert and corrupt, then you may make a collapse of any pension scheme whatever. But that is not an argument against a national pension scheme; it is an argument for national suicide, which is a very different matter. I have listened to much criticism against the machinery of the Bill; but I have heard no kind of alternative machinery proposed except that these old men and women should go before a justice of the peace and in Court prove their claim, or employ a solicitor out of the money they have stored in Consols to prosecute their claim, and if their claim is disallowed to make an appeal to the House of Lords. There was a suggestion of making the relieving officer of the board of guardians an alternative to the pension committee, but that died before it came to birth. There was no other alternative except the vague suggestion that the Local Government Board is hardly reliable as a final Court of Appeal, which, I am sure, no Member of the House would seriously press. I have heard again to-day, as I have heard before, any amount of criticism of the Bill, that too much was left to regulations, a statement partly justified and partly unjustified, and that the details of these regulations have not been thought out. Now, if we had dealt in full in this legislation with all the regulations necessary under the Bill its clauses would have had to be multiplied six or seven times over. I know of no precedent for this course in similiar legislation. The hon. Member for South Dublin says that this is the greatest experiment in social legislation since the Poor Law Act of 1834. I agree, but unfortunately for him the regulations under that Poor Law were not published until 1845, or nearly twelve years afterwards. The regulations of the Local Government Board were certainly not discussed in 1834, and I am astonished that good citizens should complain that our regulations have not yet been elaborated. The Local Government Board, the Treasury, and their expert advisers are now considering these regulations, and, however proud we may be of them, we do most heartily welcome any suggestion which may be made for their improvement. We think they may be improved, and that we have also a right to appeal to the past traditions of legislation in this and similar matters. No one on this side of the House has any quarrel with the description of the measure as a great experiment. We all know that in its details it will require modification. We all know that some of the results which we fear may be produced and that some of the results which we wish to produce will not follow from the Bill; and that, not only in matters in regard to which there has been criticisms in the House, but in matters which no one has had the foresight to consider, there may be very remarkable changes produced by the Bill in the social life of the people, for better or for worse. But, though the Government acknowledge the Bill as an experiment, and although we have, in the main, adopted an attitude of defence towards it in its progress through the House, as it leaves us our attitude is very far from being a defensive attitude, and very far from an attitude of apology. For years the reproach has been laid upon this country that, in the matter of old-age pensions, it has been lagging far behind the lesser countries of Europe and our Colonies which the hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities described as obscure with a kind of inverted Imperialism on which I congratulate him. One after another of these Colonies has elaborated schemes with regard to its aged poor, but this measure takes this country from the position of the last to the position of the first, which, without undue insular pride, may be a subject of satisfaction even to the most confirmed of Little Englanders. I have tried to judge the various provisions of the Bill, not as a humble member of the Government by whom it is introduced, but as I should have judged them in the days when I was indifferent to and a little contemptuous of all political parties, but when I lived in very intimate and familiar association with just those very classes whose lot this Bill is designed to improve, a lot which at best is hard and austere. I know that it will relieve, perhaps remove, an anxiety which to-day is passing from an obsession into a terror among those who in the heart of our civilisation are still walking in darkness and under the immediate shadow of death. I know that in thousands of humble homes it will remove the desolate and cruel choice of the wage-earner between the needs of the parent on the one hand and the needs of the child on the other; and that it will give to these old men and women a new self-respect, a new hope, and a new determination, pursued in the knowledge that they are bringing to the family exchequer at least as much as they are receiving from it. Moreover, I believe that it will enlarge the spending power of the poorer classes of the country, and that it will result in one very desirable and immediate effect — the limitation of unemployment, for the enlarged demand for food, fuel, and shelter will produce a large demand for the labour which will be immediately required to supply these commodities. Another effect more desirable will be the lifting of the pressure on the needs of the generation to come by the moral attitude which this new and unprecedented provision gives to the needs of the generation which is passing away. I say honestly and without hesitation that I would have welcomed this Bill, whatever Government had proposed it, whatever Party had approved it, inspired by whatever motives, animated by whatever ideas. I shall not modify my rejoicing because it has been devised by a Government and approved by a Party to which I have the honour to belong.

*MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has frankly confessed that the details of the Bill to which objection has been taken are indefensible and undesirable. He admits that they are inevitable and inseparable from any limited scheme of old-age pensions; and the only justification he offered for holding by them at the present time is the excuse we have heard so often during the several stages of this Bill, that it is quite impossible at the present time to afford a larger contribution from the national resources than he has proposed. I have listened, I think, to nearly all the speeches delivered in the course of the debate, and I must confess that I have no great admiration for the Bill which we have been asked to read a third time. But notwithstanding that, I was not aware until I heard the speech of the hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill, that there lay within its clauses so many dangers, tyrannies, and oppressions as he exposed to view. Further, after hearing his speech and the speech of the seconder of the Amendment, I cannot understand on what grounds the Motion for the rejection of the Bill is made. Is it because the scheme of the Bill is not of a contributory character or because it is not of a universal character? The last sentence or two of the speech of the hon. Member for Norwood did seem to indicate very dimly that he was not altogether in favour of a universal scheme, because he referred to the prospects in front of future Chancellors of the Exchequer having to raise ever-increasing sums annually to meet the ever-increasing charges of this measure. Now, just a word or two in regard to those who support a contributory scheme. I ask what is the justification of a scheme of old-age pensions at all? I think the only justification for old-age pensions is that there are people who need a provision for old age. But then comes the further question, why have we people in this condition? Why are they poor, after a hard working life of fifty or sixty years? They are poor and they are dependent upon some form of support in old age, for the simple reason that notwithstanding their hard work they have not been able out of the income they have received to make provision for old age. I submit, and any man with a knowledge of working class conditions will agree with me, that it is utterly impossible for any working man with the average working man's responsibilities, out of the average working man's wages, to provide his family and himself with the necessaries of life, let alone the comforts of civilised existence, and at the same time lay by anything at all as a provision for the future. It has been said there are those who do. Hypothetical cases have been quoted by the hon. Member opposite of old people who have invested hundreds of pounds, but it may be pointed out that where people have saved out of a workman's income—and there have been cases where they have done so—they did not do that and at the same time do justice to their families, they have only done it by pinching and starving their families. We see what is done, but we know not what struggles, what sacrifices, and what self-denial has been exerted by the working classes in order to appear respectable and make provision for their old age when they are no longer able to work to maintain themselves. Why do hon. and right hon. Gentlemen above the gangway ask for a contributory scheme? I think the real reason why certain Members of this House are asking for a contributory scheme is in order that their class may escape the obligation of contributing to these pensions.

MR. WALTER LONG: No, no, certainly not.

*MR. SNOWDEN: It must be so, it cannot possibly be otherwise. Now, I take up the opposite view. With one sentence in the speech of the hon. Member for Norwood I cordially agree. The hon. Member said, "You cannot consider this old-age pension question alone." That is true, it is part of the whole social problem. To my mind the social problem with which we have to deal is the more equal distribution of wealth. The question of social reform, in my view, is a question of making the rich poorer and the poor richer. There is no way in which you can equalise the distribution or wealth except by doing that, and therefore I advocate old-age pensions as a means of equalising the distribution of wealth of the country. No scheme of old-age pensions is worth anything to the social reformer, remember, unless it is going to add to that amount of wealth enjoyed by the working classes of the community. That is our case against a contributory scheme. Coming to the scheme formulated in the Government Bill, I find some difficulty in describing what it is. It is not contributory, it is certainly not universal, and although the question has been put to the Government time after time during the discussions, the Government have given no clear indication as to whether they intend that this old-age pension should be conferred as a right for past services rendered to the State, or whether it is simply an extension of Poor Law relief. I am not going to express any opinion on that point, although certain of the clauses of the Bill gave some reason to suppose that there was some justification for the description given by the hon. Member above the gangway. The Labour organisations of this country do not represent the thriftless and wastrel classes. The demand for old-age pensions has sprung from the most thrifty of our population, for they have found it is impossible to make provision for their old age even through a trade union or a friendly society, and there has been perfect unanimity in their demand for old-age pensions. This Bill does not meet that demand, it is very far from meeting it. The demand of the working classes of this country is for a universal pension of not less than 5s. a week, to begin at an age not higher than sixty-five. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, referring to an Amendment standing in my name upon the Paper at a previous stage of the Bill to reduce the age to sixty-five, said everybody was in favour of the age being sixty-five. If the money fell down like the manna from Heaven, and there was enough to give everybody an old-age pension at fifty, everybody would be in favour of reducing the age to fifty. The Government limit this Bill, and their excuse was that they were doing the best they could under the circumstances; that it would be impossible in the present state of finances to devote a larger sum for the purpose of old-age pensions. I want to deal with that question, and although I may be regarded as a revolutionary, what I desire to see, as I have said before, is the poor made richer and the rich poorer. I think everything must have a beginning. The Government must have forgotten—perhaps the right hon. Gentlemen may not have had the advantage of religious instruction in a public elementary school. If they had, they might have remembered some time-honoured maxims such as: "Well begun, half done," or "A thing that is not worth doing well is not worth doing at all." Have the Government done the best they could in this scheme? In my opinion they have not. They set aside a certain sum of money which was to be devoted to this Bill. The Prime Minister is a man of honour, and last year he made a definite promise in his Budget speech that a certain sum of money should be devoted to old-age pensions. At every bye-election since that date the Prime Minister's words have been put in leaflet form into the hands of the electors, who were asked to vote for the Liberal candidate, because there was £2,250,000 for old-age pensions. A friend of mine, then a candidate and now a colleague, was discussing what that promise meant, and he wrote a letter to the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister and asked him whether, in fact, he had this money, and the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "In answer to your letter, I cannot do better than to quote the speech I made in the House when introducng the Budget on 8th April."

The Prime Minister then quoted these words—

> "I shall have in hand next year, free and earmarked for the purpose a total of at least £2,250,000. That shortly will be the effect, as it is one of the main purposes of this year's Budget."

Where is that £2,250,000? The Prime Minister is an honourable man, and if in his private capacity he had made a promise that he would find in twelve months a specified sum for a specified purpose, and if the source from which that money was to come failed him in the meantime he would have found other sources, but the money would have been found. But the Government have not done that, they have provided this year for a sum less than half the sum the Prime Minister promised, and they say that is the best they can do. I am perfectly sick; the Labour Members are perfectly sick, and the results of the bye-elections have shown that the country is sick of the parrot cry that there is not enough money to carry out long overdue schemes of social reform. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Second Reading of this Bill admitted that the old-age pension scheme of New Zealand was a better scheme than the one that he was submitting to the House; but said he—"They are able to do a great many things in New Zealand which we cannot do here, they are a new country without either our obligations or our liabilities." But the exact opposite is the case; we as an old established country should be able to do what is impossible for a new country with growing expenditure and taxation to undertake. If the taxation of this country corresponded with the taxation of New Zealand per head of the population, we should have an annual income derived from taxation of over £200,000,000 a year. New Zealand can afford to give pensions of 10s. a week at the age of sixty-five and not a paltry pension of 1s. at the age of seventy. New Zealand can afford to give an old-age pension at the age of sixty-five, yet the debt of that country is £64 per head of the population as compared with £16 per head in this country. We have infinitely more facilities for carrying out any great scheme of social reform; but the reason they can give pensions in New Zealand is because the basis of all legislation in New Zealand is to prevent wealth accumulating in the hands of a few persons and to scatter it broadcast so that it may be enjoyed by the largest possible number. I ask, can we afford the money for a better scheme of old-age pensions? The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board again referred to my suggestion to reduce the age-limit to sixty-five. The hon. Gentleman said he could not afford it. I am sure the House cannot say there is no case for so reducing it This is not what the Labour Party ask for; they ask that it should be reduced to sixty, but they are content to take sixty-five as a compromise. The age of sixty-five was accepted as a compromise. What was originally advanced was the age of sixty, but they were willing to compromise as between sixty and seventy at the age of sixty-five. In these days if a workman is thrown out of steady work at the age of forty or forty-five he has very little chance of getting another permanent job. It is a fact known to all who have been making inquiries into the aged poor's condition that pauperism increases rapidly after the age of sixty-five. I believe men who have reached between sixty and seventy years of age have a right to look forward to a few years of leisure before passing away. But how many are going to enjoy the pensions at all if you do not give them the pension until they have reached a higher age than sixty-five? We have gained experience from the leading trade unions. The average age at death of members of trade unions is just a little over fifty. The average age at which members of trade unions are pensioned is just a little over sixty-three, and the average age at which those pensioners die is just a little under seventy. So that under this Bill a very small proportion indeed of our working class population are going to live to enjoy this pension. Pauperism increases very rapidly after sixty-five years of age. According to the Report of the Royal Commission in this, one of the greatest cities in the world, with its miles of palaces, with evidences in every street of the West End of wealth that never entered into the mind of Arabian romancer to imagine, 35 per cent. of the population over sixty-five are in receipt of Poor Law relief; between sixty and sixty-five years of age the percentage of those who rely on Poor Law relief is doubled. According to our Poor Law regulations, a person who has reached the age of sixty is no longer considered able-bodied, but according to this Bill he is expected to continue for ten years longer, because we have not got the money to give pensions at an earlier age. May I again remind the House, I say it not for the first time, and I hope not for the last, because facts cannot be too often repeated, that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer in introducing his Budget told us that last year the amount assessed to income-tax had increased by £37,000,000, enough to finance a universal scheme of old-age pensions twice over. May I remind the House further, that the amount of income in the last ten years brought under the notice of the Board of Inland Revenue, was increased by £250,000,000; and yet it is said that we have not money enough to afford even £10,000,000 to provide for the old age of the people by whose labour that wealth has been created. Every Member of this House must have had most heart-breaking letters from old people who are going to be excluded from the operation of this Bill by this heartless, callous, and indefensible clause which prohibits from receiving the pension those who have received Poor Law relief within twelve months. I have a letter from an old man of seventy-two years of age who has worked for the last sixty years, but who, owing to misfortune, has been compelled to receive Poor Law relief. He cannot get a pension. I have been reading of the evidences of our enormous wealth everywhere. In the newspapers I read of a sale here, in London, only last week, where seven articles brought over £100,000 in a comparatively short time, working out at nearly £400 a minute. I cut from the newspapers a little while back a paragraph which described goods for sale in Burlington Arcade, and among articles there were fur coats for "Fido" at five guineas each. Yet in the face of things like this, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, this Radical of Radicals, a member of the most advanced and progressive social reform Government which has ever held office, has the audacity to stand at that Table and offer excuses for a paltry measure of social reform like this, saying: "We have not got money to do it." The money is there; the money is staring you in the face. As Henry George used to say: "If it was a dog it would have bitten him long ago." Well, we are not going to vote against this Bill. [MINISTERIAL laughter.] Yes; I personally express no gratitude for it. I am going to take it for what it is worth; I am going to use it as a lever for extorting something more. My purpose in Parliament at any rate is to try to bring about bigger schemes of reform than this paltry scheme of old-age pensions. I remember that when the debate was closing in Committee the Leader of the Opposition, in speaking of the financial difficulties which he expected the Government to have next year, expressed regret at the reduction of the sugar tax. I do not regret that. I doubt if I would have been willing to accept this scheme of old-age pensions if it had to be financed by continuing the sugar duty. That would not be a social reform. It has been stated over and over again that rich people will benefit by this measure. We have been told that rich people out of their own private means have been providing pensions for dependents, but that now they will stop those pensions. Again, when this Bill comes into operation it will add a burden to the working classes. I have referred to the fact that pauperism increases very rapidly between the ages of sixty and seventy, the increase being more rapid after the age of sixty-five. Take the case of people of sixty-seven or sixty-eight years of age, people who are likely to come to the pension age before 1910. What is going to happen? If there had been no Old-Age Pensions Bill these people would have at once applied for Poor Law relief; but in view of this Bill their friends will endeavour to keep them off it in order that they may not be disqualified from applying for the pension. To do this these friends will have to spend money out of their own pockets. I want to say a word to the Government about the sliding scale. I do not suppose that anybody who has advocated old-age pensions ever dreamed in their most foolish moments that, when the scheme was in some measure realised, it would contain a provision for the payment of a pension of 1s. a week. The only valuable and material concession which the Chancellor of the Exchequer made was when he abolished the proposed reduction in the case of couples living together. He said that it would cost some £300,000 or £400,000 a year. I am perfectly certain, so far as one can be certain about anything one cannot prove, that the Chancellor of the Exechequer is going to save far more than that by the change from the universal 5s. a week to the sliding scale. I will tell you why I think so. Suppose the number of people with incomes of 8s. and 10s. a week were equal to the number of those with 10s. and 12s. a week, then one would equalise the other; it would not add anything to the cost at all. But the number of workpeople with private incomes of 10s. and 12s. a week seems to be enormously less than the number with 8s. or 10s. a week, so that the Chancellor of the Exchequer can save the 2s. or 3s. a week, and he is not going to be called upon for anything but an insignificant sum in regard to the change which he has made, giving only a small pension to those who have between 10s. and 12s. a week. Does he think that any self-respecting member of the working classes, a respectable working man, with a private income of 10s. or 12s. a week, would submit to the inquisition which is prescribed by this Bill for the paltry sum of 1s. a week? Does he think that such a self-respecting man would make a weekly journey to the Post Office in order to get it? I think I know enough of the working classes of this country to warrant me in believing that no member of them is going to take advantage of that part of the Bill in order to get a pension under such circumstances. Then a word or two about the character test. The Bill was discussed under the operation of the closure. We have been twitted by hon. Members above the gangway with having voted for the closure Resolution. I suppose that even fools may learn by experience, and I confess that I have learned by experience. I voted for the guillotine Resolution, because I believed that the Government had given a definite promise, or that at any rate they had said that it would be possible, in the allotted time, to give adequate consideration to every part of the Bill; but I noticed that in Committee the Government were often as anxious as Members of the Opposition to continue the discussion to prevent subsequent Amendments being reached. I have had an experience which will serve me my Parliamentary lifetime. I know that it is not wise to make rash pledges, but I think that I may venture to make this one, that never again, so long as I am a Member of this House, will I vote for a guillotine Resolution unless it is provided that there shall be some discussion at least on every section of every clause of the Bill. Just a word about the industry or character test. It was described as a character test by hon. Members sitting on these benches. The Postmaster-General when he was in charge of the Bill on one occasion said it was an industry test, and not a character test. I am not going to try to split straws about its definition; it is a matter of taste; but I say, with all reverence, that as a test of industrial character it is such as Jesus Christ himself could not fulfil. It is an industrial character test which no Member of this House could fulfil. There is no Member who, if he should be in poverty at the age of sixty, will be able to claim an old-age pension, as he would not be able to prove that he had worked according to his ability and opportunity. My chief criticism of the Bill has been that the Government have not had the courage to find the money. We shall accept the Bill and make the best use of it and use it as a lever to get further concessions. I do not think the Government of the country are likely to get much credit from this. The result of the bye-elections show this. I happened to be in a bye-election fought a day or two after the measure had been outlined by the Prime Minister and when in one of the meetings of the Liberal candidate he made the announcement that the pension age was to be seventy his statement was received with derisive laughter. That part of the Bill which excludes those who have been in receipt of poor relief during the present year has caused a great deal of heart-breaking, and I think it will cause a great deal of indignation and resentment and somehow or other resentment and dissatisfaction have a habit of expressing themselves far more effectively than satisfaction. The Liberal Party will not gain much support from this measure but I think it would have revived their decaying fortunes if they had tackled the question in a bold and courageous manner, and there is no reason in the world why they should not have done it. The Prime Minister in the Second Reading debate touched the hearts of every Member of the House by a most eloquent and pathetic picture of the unbefriended poor people who, after a strenuous life of hard work, were left unprovided for, and he made an appeal to the House on their behalf. I suppose it is too late now for me to make an appeal on behalf of a much larger number who are still going to be left unprovided for and unbefriended—old people between sixty-five and seventy who have worked for fifty or sixty years—a number sufficient to form a procession four abreast 100 miles in length. But we shall never remain satisfied until there has been assured to every man and woman the guarantee that a lifetime of useful and honest toil shall carry with it the right to a number of years of reasonable enjoyment before in the order of nature they may be expected to pass away.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): Not much has been said by the hon. Gentleman with which I agree, but there was one remark in which I am in full agreement and that is that the expression of dissatisfaction is more effective than the expression of satisfaction. That has been more and more borne in on my mind after listening to his speech. One of the most striking features of the debates on the Bill has been the group of opinions expressed in different quarters of the House, on the Bill, and then ultimately the reasons given for voting for it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin brought to bear a great deal of criticism upon the Bill, but he wound up by saying he would not vote against the Third Reading. The hon. Member in a kindly and conciliatory speech said he would vote for it. If I may make a suggestion I would say he should not look a gift horse in the mouth. In this country you cannot move at the impetuous pace that he would have legislation of this character move, and the proposal mbodied in this Bill is quite democratic enough for a great experiment of this character. We all agree with his proposal that the age of these old people should be sixty-five rather than seventy, but he must realise the difficulty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in finding in one year the necessary money. I hope before many years pass the age limit will be reduced to sixty-five, and that the amount will be found without dislocation to the credit of the country. I fully realise that the Bill is full of imperfections and objections and inequalities and anomalies. But what scheme could any one of the opponents of the Bill unfold which would not have inherent within it similar inequalities, anomalies, and difficulties? There are two other methods. There is the universal scheme of pensions which, however admirable, is not in consonance with English traditions. Of necessity it would mean that the scheme must be of a compulsory character and under the present conditions of labour and of the Poor Law and of the wage earning classes it would be totally impracticable. The second is the contributory scheme. I want to know what the contributory scheme is, because there has been a good deal of confusion on the point. There are two methods on which you could base a scheme of contributions, and I want to know which of the two hon. Gentlemen opposite prefer. There is one which would mean that everyone who was ultimately to have a pension must contribute towards it. In the present condition of the wage earning classes that would of necessity rule out a very large proportion of the most deserving and those who most urgently required pensions. I should like to know where the agricultural labourer would come in with 14s. a week. I should like to know where the women of the country come in under a scheme of that character. The agricultural labourer to-day in many of our counties is able only with the greatest difficulty to maintain himself and his family and to contribute to a friendly society. If he was asked in addition to contribute to an old-age pension fund it would absolutely break his back, and make it entirely impossible for him to maintain himself and his family. Therefore, that form of contribution appears to me quite impracticable. The other form is that the test by which a man should become a recipient of a pension should be that he had contributed to some friendly society during a certain number of years. Again that would rule out the great bulk of the women. Then we should have to face one of the most glaring anomalies, far greater than anything in this Bill, that if a man who for years past had to the best of his ability worked and contributed to a society fell ill or met with some misfortune and it was impossible for a year or two to contribute, he would be immediately ruled out. I was struck the other day by a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, a strong advocate of the contributory system. One of the chief objections that he brought to subsection (*b*) of Clause 3 was the fact that one of the reasons why a man should not be disqualified from becoming a recipient of the pension was that he had subscribed for ten years between fifty and sixty to a friendly society, and he drew a pathetic picture of men during that period being unable to subscribe for a short time and therefore being ruled out. I cannot conceive how he can consistently entertain that view, and at the same time be an advocate of a contributory scheme. The more you look into a contributory system the more it presents difficulties and anomalies. For years past I have been intimately associated with the friendly society movement, and I have been a theoretical and academic advocate of an old-age pension scheme based upon a contributory system. The more advantage one has had during these debates of looking at the *pros* and *cons* attached to a system of that character the more I have come to the conclusion that it would be quite impracticable, and if attempted to be carried out would bring about great inequalities and hardships on many large classes of the community. I have said already that there are many anomalies and difficulties in this Bill, but they are of a comparatively small character, and we must assume that very careful regulations will be laid down; and I think we may also assume that those who administer them will carry them out in a proper spirit. We have been told that the sliding scale will discourage thrift. There again I have not the slightest apprehension that to any

Sir J. Dickson-Poynder.

important extent thrift will be discouraged in the country. We have heard of one trade union which grants 13s. a week to people reaching the age of sixty-five. I think that that, however, is a solitary instance of a pension of such dimensions being granted. If hon. Members will study the different benefit societies in existence they will find that only a small minority give old-age pensions at all. Consequently this scheme of the Bill will be a valuable financial aid to those societies which continue to pay sick pay after the age of seventy because the pension will relieve them. Another society in the West of England combines in its administrative system both sick pay and old-age pension. I have been closely connected in years past with this society, and therefore I have an intimate knowledge of its working. Take the case, for example, of a young boy of fourteen who joins and becomes an ordinary subscriber and remains a subscriber until he reaches the age of sixty-five. I find that at the end of that period he would only have amassed sufficient capital to buy an annuity of 6s. 8d. a week. That is one of the very few societies that have a regular old-age pension scheme. and the Government scheme will in no way interfere with the encouragement of thrift and of members continuing their contributions, but will, on the contrary, rather encourage them to go on. There is one other aspect of the question which I should like to present to the House. and it is one that makes me favour the scheme that has been proposed more than anything else. We have heard a great deal about the finance of this scheme. I agree to a certain extent with the hon. Member who dealt with this branch of the subject, that you cannot raise this vast amount of money without taking a certain amount from the rich and handing it over to the poor. I look upon this proposal as valuable on account of the very glaring, and to my mind, dangerous disparity that now exists between extreme wealth and poverty, and anything of a legislative character which can bridge over and diminish that glaring disparity will be in the very best interests of the State as well as in the best interests of all connected with the country. This proposal undoubtedly will mitigate the poverty of those who are most distressed. Undoubtedly it will involve additional taxation upon those who are richer, but it must not be overlooked that the individual wealth of this country is now greater than has ever been known before in any country in the world. But apart from any humane view and looked at purely from the point of view of foresight, prudence, and statesmanship, I think this scheme is the wisest possible policy to adopt. As regards the financial aspect I know it is going to cost about £7,000,000. After the Bill has been in operation two or three years I would like to point out that the scheme as it stands to-day will not actually take £7,000,000 out of the pockets of the taxpayers of this country. As I look at it it will mean that in the course of three or four years it will really be a substitution of burdens on the rates for burdens upon the taxpayer. I hope that in a few years time a very large majority of those in receipt of Poor Law relief will come under the provision of the old-age pension scheme, and therefore I welcome this proposal not merely from the point of view I have indicated, but also from the point of view of an early and substantial start in the long delayed readjustment of imperial and local taxation. When the closure Resolution was under discussion I ventured to say that I believed that for all time you would have to have during the Committee stage of Bills of an important character, some Resolution passed confining debate by the allotment of time. I also ventured to point out that if that was to be carried out, and if we were to continue as a deliberative assembly granting full discussion in this House, there must be some scientific arrangement devised by which all vital questions should be ensured full debate during the Committee stage. There are many vital points in this Bill which have not had the advantage of full discussion. I should be the last person to suggest that that result has been brought about through any obstructive methods on the part of the Opposition. I do not blame the Opposition, but the system. We have seen, day after day, quite trivial Amendments discussed for two or three hours; you cannot blame anybody for that, because the Amendment called on for discussion is down on the Paper and so the discussion must drivel on. I should like to see some arrangement devised by the Government by which those trivial Amendments should be put further back on the Paper and the important Amendments given precedence. I support the Third Reading of this Bill, although I am fully alive to its objections. I realise to the full that it is a great experiment, and I think that has been frankly admitted. However, I believe the House is justified in making this experiment, not only on the grounds of humanity, but also on the grounds of policy.

*SIR WALTER NUGENT (Westmeath, S.): If Members representing Ireland have not intervened in this debate, it is not because they have no interest in this question, but because by not intervening they hoped that all the more speedily this measure might be placed on the Statute-book. Whatever objections we may have had to the original Bill they have been modified or entirely removed by the Amendments made in Committee. We welcome the concession made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer limiting the Poor Law disqualification to the year 1910. As regards the sliding scale we think that also is an improvement. We welcome the Bill more for what it makes possible in the future than for what it does at the present time. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said that no system of pensions would be complete which was not followed or accompanied by a reform of the Poor Law. There is no part of the kingdom more in need of Poor Law reform than Ireland, and, personally, I would like to see the Poor Law system as it at present exists in Ireland abolished altogether. If the Poor Law system was abolished, I think it might be possible to make contributions from local rates to the scheme before the House, and that might enable the pensionable age to be reduced to sixty-five. There is no reason why hereafter a contributory provision could not be grafted on to the present Bill so that those who contributed might be entitled to a pension in case of disability or at an even earlier age. We welcome this Bill because there will be no difficulty in improving it in the directions which I have outlined. The cost of administration of the pension scheme as compared with the Poor Law would be infinitesimal. In Ireland we consider this Bill as an honest attempt to legislate for a class which has hitherto been left out in the cold. The measure will be welcomed in Ireland, and will do much to draw closer the bonds of friendship which at present unite the democracies of the two countries.

*MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Up to the present every speaker from the Government benches as well as from below the gangway has alluded to the very great expense of having a universal scheme of old-age pensions. I think it is possible that we may exaggerate the actual cost to the community of this Old-Age Pensions Bill, or of any extension of it. The support of the aged in this country is not a new charge upon the wealth producers of the country, however new it may be to the Exchequer balance sheet. We do not kill off the old people at seventy years of age. They are kept alive somehow and somebody pays for their sustenance after the age of seventy. They cannot live for less than 5s. a week, and therefore quite 5s. a week is found by somebody at the present time. Therefore, somebody is now paying a great part of the £7,000,000 to be found next year. The charge is paid by charitable persons, who give pensions to their old servants, by charitable agencies, by philanthropic employers, and by dutiful sons and daughters. Who does not know of numbers of domestic servants, shop girls, or even governesses, who are spending part of their earnings to support an aged mother or father, and who find for them, therefore, their old-age pensions? Those people have been for years finding the £7,000,000 for old-age pensions, and what the House is doing by this Bill is making what is now a voluntary and individual charity, falling only on the best people in the community, into a compulsory charge spread over the whole community. The country as a whole will not be paying much more than at present; it is merely a redistribution of an already existing burden. It is entirely distinct from an increase of expenditure on the Army or Navy, or a grant-in-aid to the Colonies. Supposing it were possible to introduce national insurance against accident, the State might collect from employers of labour in this country the premiums now paid and call it a tax instead of an insurance premium. That might show an increase of £5,000,000 a year on our national Budget, but it would not make any difference to the employers or to the industries of the country. There would be a great rise in the amount of income collected but the community would be no worse off than at present. In exactly the same way the charge for old-age pensions is merely a replacement on a fairer and more business footing. It is only in so far as the aged get just what will provide for absolute necessity that that point is true. In so far as the aged get more money to spend on comfort or perhaps on drink or betting there will be an additional charge on industry. I submit that any improvement in the lot of those aged people is worth paying for, for our own sentimental satisfaction if for nothing else. The sacrifice the country is making is not anything like £7,000,000, will not under the worst circumstances amount to £25,000,000, but to something far less than that. Some of this charge will benefit the aged people, and we hope that many of them will be able to spend their latter days in houses of their own in the countryside. [AN HON. MEMBER: On 5s. a week?] A married couple with 10s. a week will be able to do so. It is much cheaper to live in the country than in the towns. I am anxious to impress on the Government that the passing of this measure will see the aged housed in the country instead of workhouses, and that must lead to a great demand for houses in the countryside villages, and a certain amount of the benefit you are giving to the poor old folks is bound to show itself in the increase of the amount paid for rent. There are all over the country houses let at charity rates of 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week, or even 1s. a week, just because that is absolutely as much as the people living in the cottages are able to pay. I beg the Government to notice that by giving those people more means of livelihood they are giving them also more means of paying rent. In countless cases over the country, landlords, though they may be opposed to this Bill, will be able to get more rent from these people. I am indebted for some actual cases to the hon. Member for Preston. He told me that a land agent had told him of three cases in which, as soon as the Bill was passed, he would be able to get a reasonable and fair rent for houses. He was at present getting 1s. 6d., and he would be able to raise the rents to 2s. on the passing of the Bill. I am anxious to make clear that unless the Government take the land question properly in hand — I hope they are going to do so, and I am encouraged to hope that they are going to do so by the presence of my hon. friend on the front bench — they will find that they will gradually push up the price of land, and that even the old-age pension scheme is going to raise the price of land, because poor people will be able to pay more for rent. This is only an example of a principle that underlies all our legislation. Until you tackle the land question you cannot really do permanent good to the people of this country.

VISCOUNT MORPETH (Birmingham, S.): Earlier in the evening the hon. Member for Wolverhampton constituted himself the censor of the people who sit on these Benches. I believe the hon. Member is the author of some letters to the Press in which he explained that he voted for the Government right or wrong. Those who have voted in the minority on this question are not ashamed of supporting their views, however small the minority. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board treated us with great generosity, as I should have expected from his career, for he, at any rate, has sympathy with those who find themselves compelled to vote with the minority, however small, and if I may say so his Ishmaelite origin still clings to him even on the Treasury Bench. We take this line because we believe the Bill to be an unsatisfactory and bad Bill. The hon. Member who moved its rejection stated that it was partial, incomplete, and unjust, and those words were actually accepted by the hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. I cannot imagine that a Bill of the pension because, in the opinion of the Imperial official and of the pension committee, they are not as worthy of it as some other persons in the village. Nothing is likely to be more irritating to the population of a village than that it should be divided into sheep and goats by the pension official or by a committee of the county council. In the last place, I support my friend who moved the rejection of the Bill, because I believe that under it we have introduced a measure which will inevitably lead to an auction between the two parties in the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said with some pride that he would be no party to a system of that kind. But in the few days allotted to the Bill, we have seen the system of auction in full working order. And in that very Amendment on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his proud boast that he would not give way to it because he was determined not to take any part in that transaction, the right hon. Gentleman himself capitulated. It is for that reason, and because I believe that the parties have now entered into competition on the road of danger and perhaps disaster, and because I think this measure, although it may do something to alleviate the fear of distress and old age, will in the long run do far more harm than good, that I support the Amendment.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I have listened with great interest to the whole of the debate which has taken place on the matter now before us; but have refrained from obtruding myself at any stage until now. I should, however, regret exceedingly if this debate had closed without my having an opportunity of offering in a few words to the Government, both on my own behalf and on behalf of the large body of working men whom I have the honour to represent in this House, an expression of my free, full, and whole-hearted appreciation of the step which they have taken. I am conscious, with other Members of the House, that the measure is not a final one. It cannot be so regarded. As a matter of fact there are no final Acts of Parliament at this time of day. The Bill may be, and doubtless is, open to the criticism which the noble Lord has alleged against it, as being partial and incomplete. That is frankly admitted; but I venture to say that if it be open to the charge of being partial and incomplete, it is certainly not open to the criticism brought against it by my hon. friend the Member for Blackburn in an early part of the debate viz., that it is a paltry reform. I venture to think that there are few working men, and few leaders of working men outside this House—I question whether there are many of the Labour representatives in the House—who will agree with the declaration of the hon. Member for Blackburn that this is a paltry reform. How many at the commencement of the session imagined that we should have a Bill involving financial considerations so vast and far-reaching as the scheme submitted by the Government to Parliament and the country? Would anyone have imagined that the Government would have made a beginning with anything like £6,000,000, which was the sum involved when the scheme was first projected? But this scheme is not to be taken alone but in conjunction with other measures which the Government intend to carry through during the present session. We are told that the scheme as it now stands will probably involve an expenditure next year of something like £8,000,000, but I shall be much surprised if, when we have an opportunity of meeting next year, we do not find that the financial responsibility has greatly exceeded that estimate. But in conjunction with that we have to bear in mind that the Government is determined to take half the duty off sugar. That involves £3,500,000 more, and taking it altogether, these two reforms seem to involve a financial responsibility of £12,000,000. Anyone who in the face of such considerations as those can get up and say that this is a paltry reform, has more courage than I possess. I believe the Bill will be received by the workers of this country with the greatest rejoicing. I agree with the hon. Member for Blackburn that this is part of the problem of poverty and that you cannot solve the problem of poverty, increase materially the areas of work, and enlarge the opportunities of the workers for enjoyment without, on the other hand, to some extent curtailing the riches of the rich. That is a proposition no one will dispute. Yet unquestionably the feeling arises that poverty is a social problem for which our modern civilisation has yet to find a remedy. Here in a measure we are doing something, partial and incomplete it may be, but still something to relieve poverty and to enlarge the opportunities of the poor for enjoyment, and, so far as we are engaged in a work like this, it ought to be welcome to social reformers. I have not the courage of the noble Lord who has just preceded me, who declared he would vote with the hon. Member for Norwood if he pressed his Motion to a division. Hitherto the Opposition has not shown any desire to put the House to a division either on the introduction or the Second Reading, and I doubt very much, after the speech made by the right hon. Member for South Dublin, who expressed his intention of not voting against the Third Reading, whether the hon. Member for Norwood or the noble Lord will have the courage to challenge a division. The hon. Member for Norwood told the House that the motive behind this proposal was mere party popularity; that the Government were under no pledge to deal with this question and had no mandate to deal with it. That may be, but their predecessors in office were under a pledge and had a mandate to deal with it, and I am inclined to commend the action of the Government rather than to censure them on that account. The Government are doing without a pledge and without a mandate what their predecessors who had a mandate and were under a pledge refused to do. That Party had under their control financial facilities far greater than those enjoyed by the present Government. During the four years they were in office from 1895 up to just before the South African War they had aggregated surpluses amounting to £9,500,000. No one will deny that that Party were under a pledge, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition least of all. I have here a copy of his polling card, issued to the electors in 1895, which contains fifteen points of the programme of the Unionist Party, in the order, I take it, of their relative importance, and old-age pensions stands fourth on the list. That indicates the importance which the right hon. Gentleman attached to this question then. Yet in the four years succeeding 1895, when they had these aggregated surpluses of £9,500,000, the pledges they had given vanished like the baseless fabric of a dream, and it is left for the Government to give effect to the pledges given by and the mandate given to the Party opposite in 1895. I end as I began. I hail with delight the beginning His Majesty's Government have made in the way of providing old-age pensions for aged poor men. Years ago, long before responsible statesmen and politicians had ventured to throw the sanction of their influence and the weight of their intelligence on the side of old-age pensions, I remember a conversation I had with the right hon. Member for West Birmingham who is so honourably and creditably identified with this movement. He put to me this question: "What is the subject that interests most the minds of the industrial classes"? At that time I had the honour to be the Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, and had the opportunity of gathering from the leaders of the men throughout the country what their feeling was, and I had no hesitation in saying: "If you can guarantee the working classes of this country that in the time of old age or unpreventible misfortune they will not be compelled to throw themselves on public charity, you will have accomplished one of the greatest measures of reform that our or any other day has witnessed." I believe the scheme which the Government have launched, imperfect and incomplete as it may be, will bring comfort to many homes which would not have that comfort if the scheme was not to come into operation on 1st January next year. We have, in my own county of Northumberland and in the neighbouring county of Durham, a movement the object of which is to provide cottages for our old workmen. In Northumberland we have 100 cottages and we are erecting them at the rate of ten a year. There are others, because the employers have kindly undertaken to build also. But in the 100 that are under the control of the committee, there are 175 tenants, men and their wives, and of those, 120, if living next January, will be eligible for these pensions. They all hail with pleasure the scheme before the House, and I thank from my heart the Government who have had the courage to face this subject, and wish them Godspeed in their endeavour.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I have some reluctance in intervening in a debate of which I have not heard the important speeches on either side or any of the speeches until a few minutes ago, and am, therefore, not quite aware of the arguments on either side. I am, however, reluctant to leave this Bill, discussed as it has been, without making some observations and attempting to sum up and bring to a focus, if I can, some of the impressions that it has aroused in my mind. I listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Northumberland, who has just sat down, and thought much of it extremely interesting, but was sorry that, contrary to his ordinary Parliamentary habit, he should have travelled somewhat outside the scope of the Bill into controversial politics of ten years ago. I have not the smallest objection to that. I live in an atmosphere of controversial politics. I do not, however, think it very interesting or relevant to the Bill. He thinks that while undoubtedly the majority of the Unionist Party have for many years been in favour of old-age pensions, they ought to have taken an opportunity of bringing in a Bill either in the session of 1896, 1897, or 1898—before, that is, the South African war, and he thinks that the fact that the Government did not bring in a Bill in one of those three years is a slur on their political reputation. I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. I do not think that the financial position of the country at that time would have justified any such experiment as the Government is now trying, and if the lapse of three years is supposed to condemn a Government for not bringing in a Bill, I should have thought that the present Government would hardly escape. But that is not an important part of the controversy with regard to this Bill, because we are all agreed that some scheme of pensions is extremely desirable, and the only thing we have doubt about is the manner in which the Government has gone to work in carrying out that unanimously accepted object. It is that that gives me, for one, very serious misgivings. I think that neither the actual provisions of this Bill nor the mode in which the Government have allowed it to be discussed gives us the smallest security that one of the greatest and most costly experiments in social legislation is going to be tried under circumstances that will give any hope of permanent success. There are three main questions raised by the scheme. The first is, will this Bill work according to its avowed objects? Is the machinery of the Bill, in other words, going to give pensions on the plan that the Government say is desirable? The second is, how is it going to affect the broader and wider problems of social reform? And the third is, how is it going to affect the national finances? These are the three problems that every man in this House, no matter in which quarter he may sit, should really consider if he wants to estimate the value of the legislative experiment the Government are now trying. The first point is whether the Bill is really going to work out according to the theory of its framers; and, if it does, what will be its results? The theory of its framers is a very simple one. They say that, pending the acquisition of further national resources, they must limit their Bill to pensions for persons seventy years of age, and, to put it broadly, of good character. How is this Bill going to attain these two objects? How is the machinery going to limit the Bill to persons of seventy and to persons of good character? And will the machinery work smoothly, justly, and to public advantage? I cannot really believe that the Government have thoroughly thought out the method in which their own machinery is going to work. Take the first of the two conditions, that of age. That is one of the subjects we have discussed. We have not had an opportunity of discussing the age as between seventy and sixty-five, because that was shut out by the closure, but we have discussed on more than one occasion the machinery by which the age of seventy is to be arrived at. I do not think that by any statement the Government have shown a clear idea of the difficulties by which that investigation is surrounded or the means by which those difficulties are to be surmounted. In the first place, who are the investigators? They are officers of the Inland Revenue, a single committee for each county and large borough, and ultimately the President of the Local Government Board. For the life of me I cannot see that an investigation can be carried out by any of these three bodies. I made some remarks in Committee with regard to the Inland Revenue officers which I believe have given pain to those most estimable public officers. If I have said anything that gave them pain I most heartily withdraw it. They are a most valuable body of men, and carry out duties of great responsibility with perfect uprightness and great efficiency. But I ask whether the most admirable performance of the duties of the Inland Revenue either gives a man the training or provides him with the machinery by which this kind of investigation is to be carried out. Take the case of an unskilled labourer in London. He reaches an age that he himself thinks is either seventy or very nearly so. He believes that he has worked hard all his life, and that if anybody deserves a pension he does. He applies to the Inland Revenue officer and says: "My name is O'Grady."

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid): Make it Smith, and then you are safe.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR. I chose an Irish name for a particular reason which will appear directly. He says: "My age is seventy, and I desire to be supplied with a pension. I come from Cork." The Inland Revenue officer says: "What proof have you that you are seventy?" He has no proof. Why should he have a proof? I do not believe I should know my own age if it were not that tactless friends are constantly reminding me of it. Most assuredly a dock labourer who left Cork thirty years ago may very well be excused if he has not proof of his age, since he was born in a country where there was no registration of births at the time when he was presumably born. How is this unfortunate official going to investigate in the City of Cork whether Mr. O'Grady working at the docks is or is not seventy years of age? The thing appears to be wholly impossible, and there is no machinery for doing it. The county committee to which he refers are no better off than himself, and if they refer to the head of the Local Government Board he is no better off. The machinery cannot be found and will not be supplied. These are considerations that the Government have never faced, for, though they have been urged more than once in Committee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has never really replied to them. He contented himself with pointing out, what nobody denies, that in every village the age of everybody is known, and that there are places and professions where there would be no difficulty. That does not get over the difficult point with regard to the very people you want to help with these pensions, the poor of the large towns, the unorganised, those who do not belong to trade unions. In these cases neither they nor anybody else can produce that legal proof which is at the very basis of the Bill. If the difficulties with regard to age are overwhelming, what are we to say with regard to the investigation as to character? None of us are without some misgivings as to the enormous power given to an Imperial officer and to a local committee to form a judgment on the way in which the poorer classes of the community have carried out their life's duty. It is not a pleasant thing to have to do, and if it is done honestly and conscientiously it will be a very painful duty thrown on those who may have to do it. Here, again, we really have very little means of obtaining assistance. Do not let us consider the country village where everyone's character is known. There may be an opportunity for favouritism or vindictive attacks on unpopular persons, but the facts will be known and may be fairly and properly judged upon. But how can the facts be known with regard to the great floating population of the huge industrial centres? They cannot be known. It seems to me we may go further and say even that the intentions of the Government with regard to character are not being carried out. Will anybody look at the Bill and consider the position of the widow? Take the case of a widow of respectable character with a number of children, who has been obliged since 1st January to appeal to the guardians. She cannot get a pension. She is absolutely excluded. Is there a more deserving case in the world than the woman left without a husband to work for her, living with the care and responsibility of children incapable of working for themselves? I cannot imagine any case more worthy of assistance; but it will not be assisted. The woman has been driven to accept Poor Law relief, and she is excluded. When you turn to the case of a man who has subscribed to a friendly society from the age of sixty, it does not matter what his wife's character may be. She is sure of a pension. The Chancellor of the Exchequer dealt with that question on the Report stage, and thoroughly misunderstood it. He thought my noble friend the Member for Marylebone was maintaining the proposition that a wife who carried out her household duties with economy and efficiency was not really helping to earn the pension of which her husband, by subscribing to a friendly society, was securing possession. That was not my noble friend's contention. He was pointing out that a husband might have been thrifty, and might have subscribed for ten years to a friendly society, but if he died a year after reaching the age of seventy, his widow, whatever had happened before, if she had every vice incident to poor humanity, would have an absolute right to a pension because her husband, in spite of thriftless ways and worse, had been able to continue his subscriptions for ten years. I cannot see that that carries out the views of the Government and of the House, yet that is the Bill as it must go to a House where it is impossible, even if the Government desire to allow it, to make any change in the amount charged upon the taxpayers. There is another point as to character. Of all the people we want to assist, I have warmer sympathy with none than with the man or woman who, towards the end of a long and honourable life, is not well enough after the age of seventy to be looked after in his or her own home. What is the remedy for that person? There is none save the workhouse infirmary. We have heard a great deal of the brand and the stigma of Poor Law relief. It may have been exaggerated by some; but we all agree that the self-respecting among the poor look with extreme repulsion upon receiving assistance through the machinery of the Poor Law or in Poor Law buildings. But these people, who have, by the necessity of their condition, to make use of Poor Law machinery and buildings are to be deprived of what is called, we believe most falsely, the right to a pension. They are not to have 5s. a week; they are to lose their homes; they are to suffer the stigma of Poor Law relief. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Bill touches the cases of all the poor over seventy years of age, or even deals with the most deserving cases. It does not, and the professions of the Government in this respect, as well as in others, are wholly baseless. There is one other point on which I must say a word. You are dealing with a sum which at the lowest is £6,500,000, and, according to the hon. Member who last spoke, will be much more. You are giving that over absolutely to bodies which are responsible to no legal tribunal whatever. I have the utmost confidence in the general honesty of the committees and county councils and of the officials of the Government; but are we wrong to look with some suspicion on the possibility that this vast potentiality of bribery will never be misused? The six or seven millions sterling is to be distributed at the discretion of certain individuals. That discretion is not fettered by strict legal interpretation; t is a matter of estimate and judgment. If an Imperial official thinks that a man has not really been a very creditable character, or if somebody has enemies, it is conceivable that that person may lose both his pension and his vote. I do not believe there is much danger of abuse in this country. I do not believe that this Bill will lead to it. Even if the theory is ever worked out, which I do not think it will be, I admit that, if there is a danger, it is not a great one here. I am not so sure that where party politics run high, as in Ireland, you can be so certain of the working of it. It is not that Irishmen have a larger dose of original sin than the rest of us; but the way in which local administration is worked in Ireland has a tinge of party politics which it has not in any other part of the United Kingdom, and I am afraid that if the Bill is worked on the theory of the Government it will be found that every friend of a local authority in Ireland will be over the age of seventy, while no enemy of the local authority will ever get beyond the age of sixty-nine. I have been endeavouring to show that if it is attempted to work the Bill according to theory you throw an almost impossible task upon the executive, and your discrimination will be arbitrary, and the class you most want to help will be excluded. But will the Bill be worked according to theory? Will its operation be confined to persons over seventy, and of virtuous character? I do not believe for one moment that it will. We are very good-natured people, particularly so when we are dealing with other people's money; and the duty of excluding anybody from the benefits of the Act will be a painful and also an expensive one. Every committee which declares a person in its district or county or borough to be ineligible for a pension has to do that which is very painful from the point of view of humanity, and very disagreeable from the point of view of the local purse. When humanity and economy are on one side, I think they are too strong for any legislative dykes which the Government may raise against them, and I do not believe that the dykes that the Government have raised will keep out the waters of expenditure for one moment. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway greatly regretted that they could not discuss their Amendment for reducing the age from seventy to sixty-five. I do not think it will make very much difference. I believe that under this Bill everybody who desires a pension and can show a decent appearance of being seventy will probably be found eligible by a kindly Imperial officer and a charitable county committee. That raises one or two points of very great importance. The first point touches on what I have described as the second great question raised by this Bill—namely, its future effect on social reform. If you are going to use, as I am sure you are going to use, this Bill as a mere method of giving pensions at the taxpayers' expense to persons in declining years, and who have not got a very black mark against their character, how will you prevents its becoming a mere part of the outdoor relief system of the country? You cannot do it. It is quite true that you have got a different machinery for allocating the money, but to suppose that the ordinary citizen is going nicely to distinguish between what he gets through the Imperial officer and the committee and what he gets through the relieving officer and the board of guardians, and to regard one as discreditable and the other as creditable, is really trespassing upon our credulity. There will not be that broad distinction in the public mind. It will gradually be thought, what is, indeed, the fact, that this is a mere addition to outdoor relief as outdoor relief is now administered in a large number of parishes in this country. In a very large number of unions in this country it is perfectly well known that outdoor relief is given on easy terms to persons who can show a good character. In those districts it ceases to be a badge of discredit. A proof of poverty it may be, but it is not a badge of discredit, and these pensions, which will certainly be given in somewhat reckless fashion under this Bill, will be regarded as a substitute—an improved substitute I admit, because it is larger in amount—for that outdoor relief, and there will not be that broad distinction between out relief on the one side and pensions on the other which, I think, everybody would desire should be kept unimpared. And, remember, if you give, as I think you will give, these 5s. pensions, easily and without examination, to persons whose age has not been proved, though advanced in life, they really do become a subvention of wages. The man of sixty-five or sixty-six who conceives himself, or is conceived by his neighbours, to be, roughly enough for the purposes of this Bill, of the age of seventy and is still capable of a fair day's work, will be very glad to supplement his pension by doing a certain amount of odd jobs if he can get anybody to employ him. But he will neither desire, nor will he obtain, an amount of wages which will diminish the amount he gets from the State. What he will get will be as much as, but no more than, will enable him to get the full 5s. and, if his labour is worth more than that, the employer gets labour at less than its true market price, and these pensions become quite clearly and plainly a subvention in aid of wages, as was the case under the old Poor Law. This leads to another question connected with social reform on which I confess I feel very strongly. What is to be the relation of this measure to the inquiry now going on with regard to the reform of the Poor Law and to the legislation which the Government propose to found thereon at some future period? The late Government, conscious that the Poor Law system of the country was antiquated and utterly worn out, appointed a Royal Commission to consider the subject. That Commission has been working hard for three years. The Government hope that it will report this year. I go merely on common rumour when I say I think that that is a somewhat sanguine estimate. It might have been accurate before this Bill, but this Bill has wholly changed the problem which is before them. The Commission was appointed to consider the Poor Law as it stood in 1906, but you have profoundly altered the Poor Law by this Bill, and I cannot imagine—I have had no communication with any member of the Commission — how the Commissioners are going to report without fresh investigation and without waiting to see how this Bill is going to affect the problem of outdoor relief. I believe this Bill is going to substitute 5s. pensions, broadly speaking, for outdoor relief almost all over the country. If it is going to do that, it is quite evident that the whole problem of outdoor relief will be completely changed, and I do not know how in these circumstances you can expect a Commission, dealing with so complex a subject, to report with any confidence to the Government and the House. The truth is the Government must be perfectly well aware that they ought to have taken this question of old-age pensions as part of the general problem of poverty. You cannot divorce the two. If only for the purpose of distinguishing pension from Poor Law relief you must consider the two together. You must consider your machinery for Poor Law relief in order to consider fairly your machinery for pensions, and until you know what your machinery for Poor Law relief is likely to be, how can you say what your machinery for carrying out the pension distribution is going to be or the relation which this vast expenditure of public money is going to bear to the sums now expended by Poor Law guardians? This really brings me to the last of the three points I wished to touch upon—namely, the relation of this measure to our national finances. I confess that I look on this whole question with considerable alarm. The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme explained that after all no great burden would be cast on our national finances, because the money was now paid by the charitable and through the Poor Law, and there was not much difference whether the burden was thrown on the Exchequer by this Bill or whether it was left to be paid sporadically and uncertainly, partly by Poor Law machinery and partly by the private machinery of charity. I think that the hon. Member is profoundly mistaken. It makes the whole difference where the money comes from. The mere fact that there is money to be got somewhere does not make it easy for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to get it. The hon. Member who last spoke congratulated the Government upon having brought in the Bill with courage. I see very little courage in the bringing in of this Bill. Courage is required if you bring in a Bill whose provisions and the financial resources connected with it are brought into one conspectus before the public, and they are shown what they are to get and what they have to pay for it. The Government here shows what the public are to get, but they have not yet been shown how they are to pay for it. But there is a divergence of opinion even among the members of the Government. The Prime Minister assured us more than once that the Government had considered the point, and that they clearly saw their way to provide the necessary funds by means of free trade finance. This method of carrying it out is a secret which the Prime Minister has kept not only from the Opposition, but from his colleague the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think that is carrying secrecy too far. I think that in the comity of the Cabinet the late Chancellor of the Exchequer should have told the present Chancellor of the Exchequer how, within the limits of free trade finance, £6,500,000 are to be found next year and £7,500,000 the year after. It is not going to be £7,500,000 either. If my interpretation of the situation is correct, you will get to £11,500,000 almost immediately, and how within the limits of free trade finance are you to get £11,500,000? There is no great information either to be got from the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, according to what he has already told the City, and if he has kept the secret from the high financial authorities of the City it is not likely that he will tell his critics in the House. I do not ask him, therefore, to tell us, if he does not know. But again I ask, where, within the limits of free trade finance, are £6,500,000, £7,500,000, or £11,500,000 to be obtained? The finance cannot be put on one side, and when the right hon. Gentleman has got the money, neither he nor any one else can deny the enormous public burden cast on the finances of the State. It is not a thing to be lightly done, nor is it to be done without some general survey of your financial obligations. I do not understand that the Government have made any such general financial survey. I am not going to raise the question of the burden of national armaments; but there are other questions eminently deserving of the attention of the House connected with social reform. Is it not manifest that almost every problem of social reform comes back to the Treasury, the Imperial or the local Treasury, in the end? How are you going to give these vast sums of money for one particular purpose if you have dried up the sources of supply for the use of any other purposes that can be proposed? It may be right, while the objects to be attained by the Bill may be so clear and excellent that we need not regret the expenditure. But I should like to know what the other things are. Money lies at the root of almost everything we do; but I do not think that you will find the suggested taxation of the rich a very satisfactory method of increasing the national resources for the purposes of social reform, even from the point of view of society. I admit that this Bill will greatly relieve the Poor Law, that it will be a subvention to the local authorities in aid of the Poor Law. So far they may have resources set free for other purposes connected with housing, education, and other cognate questions; but I cannot believe that any future Government for years to come can have money at liberty for any other purpose of social reform whatever. How can they? The Chancellor of the Exchequer is a sanguine man, and I believe he looks forward, almost cheerfully, to the problems of the next Budget, although they are as yet unsolved in his mind. I wish him well. But even in his most sanguine mood he can hardly look forward to the time of this great and growing charge when he will be able to meet satisfactorily other claims that touch the heart and the conscience. What we want is some broader survey of their obligations before they commit the country to this vast expenditure. The Government have made no such survey, and they have admitted this. In the forefront of one of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speeches, he told us with emphasis that they were going to await the Report of the Poor Law Commission in order to form some kind of estimate of what the reforms would cost, that they were going to frame the finances of the country on lines not only to satisfy all that can be asked for from this Bill, but from the other Bill. But they will not have a shilling to deal with the Report of the Poor Law Commission or for the demands made upon them for social reforms. It is for that reason I look forward, and not I alone, with much misgiving to the method by which the Government are attempting to carry out the objects of this Bill. With those objects I heartily sympathise. As far as I am concerned, I frankly admit I rejoice in a policy of old-age pensions, but I should like to have seen that most difficult of all social problems dealt with in a manner by which alone a satisfactory result will ensue. I should like to have seen a serious attempt to produce some scheme by which all these investigations might be avoided, and we might be able to give a pension as of course, or have, what I should much prefer, some contributory scheme. I am told that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board said that he himself at an earlier period had been in favour of a contributory scheme. I do not think that he ought too hastily to have given up such a scheme as impracticable. Such a scheme would at all events have two plain and manifest advantages—it would avoid inquisitorial investigation, and it would get over the other difficulties which have been alluded to at less cost to the Exchequer, and that means that more money would be left free for the necessary purposes of national defence or other great purposes of social reform. I regret the hasty course which the Government have taken, but the responsibility must lie with them. The Government alone have the opportunity of estimating the resources at their disposal for carrying it out. They, and they alone, have the machinery for making some comparative survey of all the needs of the State. On them lies the responsibility. The Bill does not satisfy the demands of those who claim the right to old-age pensions, and on the other hand it so burdens and cripples the national resources that we may find it impossible to meet other obligations not less pressing, not less connected with the safety of the State and the well-being of the poorer members of the State.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): But for the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down I should not have deemed it necessary to take any part in this debate after the able and powerful speech of my hon. friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board. As a rule, I think debates, and especially long debates, on Third Reading, are rather futile, but I do not regret this debate, and all the less after the very interesting, genial, and significant speech with which the Leader of the Opposition has fascinated the House. There was one observation he made which I welcome specially because I know what it carries with it. The right hon. Gentleman gave a hint to the House of Lords—a hint which, coming from him, is in the nature of a command. The right hon. Gentleman criticised rather severely the machinery of the Bill. He stated that important parts of the Bill had not been discussed. If he will take the trouble to look at the Amendments he will find that the main objections to the Bill were discussed. The criticisms directed against the Bill were in the main directed to the sliding scale, the married couples, a contributory scheme, the income limit, the paupers, the industrial test, the machinery, and the reduction of the age. With the exception of the reduction of the age, we have discussed each and every one of these points during the five days we were in Committee and the day on Report. There was not one of these important elements in the Bill which was not the subject of considerable and even exhaustive debate. I accept in its entirety what the right hon. Gentleman said about the three main problems to be considered, but there was not a criticism which he directed against the machinery of the Bill which would not be applicable to every scheme that has ever been or ever could be submitted to this House. Take the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—any scheme which he submitted. Take the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon's Committee, or the scheme of the Aged Pensioners' Committee—and I should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Member for West Birmingham committed his Government in debate in 1903 to the Chaplin Committee's Report. He took part in the debate on the Aged Pensioners' Bill, and on behalf of the Government accepted the outlines of that Report. There is not a single criticism which the right hon. Gentleman directed against our scheme that would not be applicable to every point in the Report of the Chaplin Committee. He said: How are you to find out whether a man is seventy years of age or not? and he put the imaginary case of O'Grady. He took a case which must be exceptional, and I felt when he chose a case of that kind it was the best testimony to the fact that in the main the machinery of this Bill would work smoothly, and that it would only break down in exceptional cases. If the right hon. Gentleman felt that our machinery was bad, he would have taken an ordinary workaday case; he would have taken the case, not of O'Grady but of Smith. But, instead, he took the case of an aged Irish labourer born in Cork, but having spent most of his days in London. On the whole, I think that is an exceptional case. But let us follow the career of O'Grady. Let us take, first of all, his go. I think we may assume that in the vast majority of cases the Irish labourer would be a member of a trade union. If there is an organisation got up for the purpose of fighting anybody, you may rely upon it that an Irish labourer will be somewhere in it. If he is a member of a trade union, then we can get at his age, for although he may overstate his age when he goes to the pension officer, he is not likely to do it to the trade union. So that, therefore, we have, first of all, eliminated all the ordinary cases of Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen working in London, and it is purely the case of the Irish labourer who has come from Cork when he is a boy; we have eliminated nine-tenths of the O'Gradys who have come over to this country, and we have only got this miserable remnant of the sect who are absolutely devoid of the most predominant instincts of the Irish nature, and who do not desire to join an organisation to smash up either the capitalist or the landlord. He is so easy to deal with, he is so docile, he is a man of really so exceptional a character, that I feel sure he could not possibly deceive a pension officer, and therefore I am not very much afraid. Although I have very great apprehensions about the cost of the scheme, I do not think O'Grady alarms us. But in any scheme this exceptional person will give you trouble, and if this imaginary Cork Irishman with his pedigree and character and his birth certificate is going to stand in the way of an old-age pension scheme for everybody, then there is nothing you can do, there is no scheme in the world that O'Grady cannot get over. Therefore we have got to defy him at some stage or other. We have got to work up sufficient courage to face this imaginary gentleman and try to do justice by the remaining seventy-years-old people who have made honest representations. Take the character test, as the right hon. Gentleman called it—it is not a character test at all. What difficulty is there in finding out what this imaginary gentleman has worked at? That is really all you have to find out. If he has contributed to a friendly society or a trade union he must have got his money somewhere, and therefore there is no difficulty about him. But supposing he is outside a friendly society, you must first of all find out whether he has worked. You ask him, "Where did you work?" "In what employ were you?" "Can you name your employer?" The pension officer can easily test that, and it does not require a very high level of intelligence to make inquiries from Messrs. Smith and Co. whether O'Grady worked for them. It is for him to prove; he has got to make the application; he has got to prove his age; he has got to say where he was born. [OPPOSITION cheers.] No doubt of it. It is the first time that it has dawned upon hon. Gentlemen opposite. I have drawn a cheer from the anti-old-age pension party which sits entrenched up there. Of course, he sends in his application and says he is seventy years of age. Of course, he has got to say where he was born; and surely the pension officer can be trusted to make inquiry about it. It is upon this basis that the right hon. Gentleman ventures to condemn root and branch the whole of our scheme. He says the Government have never considered it and the Government have never thought of O'Grady the whole time they were dreaming of this great scheme. I do not believe there ever was such a speech delivered which is such a complete justification of our whole scheme. If the right hon. Gentleman had told us what is his alternative it would have been different. Let the House remember that he is in favour of old-age pensions; he is delighted that Parliament is to deal with it at last. He wants something done for old people, but this is not the way. Then what is the way? He has not told the House. He has not pledged himself to a contributory scheme. I ask him, is his alternative a contributory scheme? He has taken part in these debates on the Second Reading, the Committee stage, and the Third Reading, but never once has he told the House what is his idea of the way it should be dealt with.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman has challenged me. We have absolutely not sufficient evidence before us as to how contributory schemes have worked elsewhere. Every Report referred to is antecedent to the real development of the German scheme, and, as we know from the speeches of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, they have not fully looked into that.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I do not object to the interruption of the right hon. Gentleman, but he ended his interruption with a misstatement. He said we have not looked into the German scheme. We have looked into the German scheme, and very carefully, and with the same result as everybody in this House on either side—the result of dismissing it, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham did. The right hon. Gentleman's Government appointed four Commissions and Committees, they investigated the subject in every shape and form, they had Commission after Commission, and eventually in 1903 they committed themselves to the Chaplin scheme, and now the right hon. Gentleman says he really does not know whether it is this scheme or a contributory scheme—he is absolutely in the dark as to the whole thing. And this after committing himself through his spokesmen to what is practically the plan of the Government. Has he any right, therefore, to criticise our scheme in the way he has done without, at any rate, saying what is his idea? Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that we ought not to proceed now? Does he mean that we ought to allow these half-million poor people to go on year after year in disappointment? Are we to go on year after year doing nothing, until at last he has made up his mind as to which of these schemes he is prepared to recommend? The right hon. Gentleman has criticised our scheme on the ground that the machinery is bad. I say this criticism is not merely inadequate but grossly inadequate. He has pointed out no insuperable difficulties. Of course, there are difficulties in any scheme, I do not care what it is. Nobody except the Member for Preston has ventured to commit himself to the German scheme, not even the noble Lord opposite, and the moment he begins to investigate it he will find it is absolutely impossible in this country. Nobody has answered this question—if we apply the German scheme, what are we to do with the women? The great majority of those who will receive benefits under our scheme are women. Under the German scheme not 10 per cent. are women. I know perfectly well this scheme is full of difficulties. But you have got to begin. You have got to solve these difficulties. I have no doubt that after a few months' operation of this scheme we shall discover difficulties which not even the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman were able to anticipate. Of course, in dealing with a gigantic problem of this sort, with more than half a million of people, in thousands of diverse circumstances, you will have difficulties which you never suspected. Any legislation of this kind is bound to encounter new surprises suddenly arising. But it is not beyond the resources of British statesmanship to cope with such difficulties as they arise. Anyway, is that really a reason for doing nothing? In spite of the hon. Member for Blackburn, I say we are doing a great deal. The hon. Gentleman, not for the first time, attacked us with an acrid ferocity which is entirely his own. We are dealing with the problem of 572,000 old people, poverty stricken, but too proud to seek the charity of the Poor Law. We are dealing with them as a first instalment. The hon. Gentleman, I will not say had not the generosity or the manliness, but I will say had not the sense of justice to recognise that. Why, he taunted us as if we were really robbing these 572,000 people instead of trying to endow them. We have pledged ourselves next year to deal with the problem of the pauper, about which the hon. Gentleman attacked us. He has never even recognised that. Cannot he be just even to the Liberals? I have no doubt he will go about the country repeating these attacks. He will never mention that we are giving pensions to 572,000 people who had never been dealt with before; that we are finding £7,000,000 in addition to the £3,500,000 we have taken off the sugar duty for this purpose. He will never mention that we are pledged to deal with the pauper next year.

Mr. SNOWDEN: You are not.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I say we are pledged to deal with paupers next year. This is what we have done and the fact remains. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen may criticise the Bill; they may say the machinery is defective; they may say we have not done as much as we ought to have done; but the fact remains that the moment the Bill gets into operation there will be over half a million of poor people who for the first time will be raised above destitution and poverty.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I apologise to the House for intervening in the debate at this late hour. What astonished me in the course of the discussion is the different grounds hon. Gentlemen above the gangway have taken. First they wanted a proper universal scheme; then they wanted certain qualifications put in; then the mover of the Amendment to-day deplored that there were so many qualifications in order that a poor man might get a certificate of character before he could secure a pension. Now they regret the failure of their efforts to put in still more qualifications. I have read somewhere that life is a comedy to a thinking man and a tragedy to a feeling man. That is all the difference in the world. We have had an exhibition of thinking without feeling. I have felt pretty keenly about the whole business—listening to the flippancy which one expects at some kind of Tory meeting. In a pamphlet which I wrote ten years ago I anticipated that whenever a scheme of old-age pensions was considered in the House of Commons it would be called "a glorified outdoor relief." So is every kind of pension that is paid out of the taxpayers' pockets. We have been told by opponents of the Bill about inquisitorial examinations of claimants for a pension. It is very good of these hon. Gentlemen, I admit it. Is it not the case that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who receive pensions from His Majesty's Government are obliged to declare in writing their impecuniosity? How dreadfully lowering and degrading it must be to a man whose private income would be wealth beyond the dreams of avarice to an ordinary poor man in this country! Yet, he has the nerve to write to somebody and to declare his impecuniosity before he gets his £1,200 a year! No man reads him a little homily on thrift. No man says a word about it. There is nothing degrading about pensions at all, except when they get down to 5s. a week; they are not awfully degrading but the reward for services to the State—that is if they are anything between £1,200 and £4,000 a year. They then add to the dignity and importance of His Majesty's subjects. The noble Lord who spoke earlier in the afternoon made a glaring mistake, because a Return was moved for in 1901 showing the number of members of friendly societies who were in the workhouse, and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham quoted the fact that there were 4,000 men in the workhouses of England and Wales who had been members of friendly societies for thirty years and upwards. I do not take my own figures in this matter. It is an astonishing thing that all these facts having been published by the Charity Organisation Society is the excuse for not providing pensions earlier. Nothing was done by the Unionist Party in 1899 because they had been captured by the Charity Organisation Society. Then they gave several homilies on the Act of 1834, but if they had kept up-to-date with regard to that Act they would have found that what with rules and regulations that had been made since there is hardly a vestige of the 1834 Act left. There is a Poor Law Commission sitting now, and that would be a reason for doing nothing, because whenever the late Government wished to do nothing they appointed a Royal Commission. I have illustrated the fact, I think, before. It is the case of the man who once saw a lot of coloured cooked eggs on a barrow, and he said, "What are those eggs, guv'nor?" "Oh, they are partridge eggs." "Do you think a hen would bring them off?" "Yes, I should think so." "Then how much for a sitting?" "1s. 6d. and a share of your luck." About four weeks after he turned up again and gazed wistfully at the stall, and the man recognised him and said: "Well, what luck?" "Oh, you never saw anything like it in your life. The hen, she sat and sat, and I am blowed if she did not cook them." There has never been an Old-Age Pension Commission or a Poor Law Commission which did not well cook their Reports before bringing them to this House. The regulations of the Board have amended Poor Law relief out of all knowledge. They told us to give outdoor relief generously, and in giving it to old and deserving people we should not rake up the past. I was a guardian and I wished to do it generously. Some said "They do not want old-age pensions; you want to make the workhouse more comfortable." Well, we did that, and what was the result? I was put on trial and very nearly got time. I rejoice at the start that is now going to be made. I do not contend for a moment that the Leader of the Opposition was not right, when he said you will not get rid of a certain class of people; but what I am afraid of is, and I hope those who draw up these regulations will bear this in mind, that if charity commissioners and boards of guardians are connected with it you must safeguard people who require infirmity relief from being pushed into some dark squalid hole and left there. There are many people who if they had £1 a week could not take care of themselves. This Bill is not wanted for that purpose; it is wanted for people who can look after themselves. I believe it will stop the recruiting for the workhouse. God knows what sacrifices are made by children to keep their parents and little children to keep their grandparents. I know a man who had to go to his old mother and say: "This is boots off my children, mother; what am I to do?" And the old mother, out of her love for the little ones, made the plunge and went into the "house" in order to keep the boots on the feet of the little children. In this case we know what we want, and we do not want it to be said hereafter that when this Bill was before the House we said we would rest content with this. We are going to prevent old folk breaking up their homes. They struggle on to keep a roof over them, and you wonder why they are content to live in misery and squalor when they can go to the workhouse and be well tended. There is one thing the value of which you cannot define and that is liberty. There are none so poor but they would give their lives for it, and what I want to do, and what I am sure we shall do by this Bill, is to enable the children to keep their parents and give them what they cannot buy, a little love and sympathy. What have you done all the time? If ever you wanted an objectionable rate or if ever you wanted to get anything that would be fought against, you put it on to the poor rate. Thus it was made to appear that you were spending millions and millions on the poor, when you were doing nothing of the kind. What are the actual figures? In 1905–6, there was, roughly, £30,000,000 collected in England and Wales under the head of the Poor Law, or £26,000,000 odd in England and Wales excluding London; but the actual amount paid in indoor and outdoor relief was £6,603,549. Why deceive the public to this extent? Why do you not tell the truth about the figures? There are just under 300,000 aged people, or perhaps a few more, who are getting indoor or outdoor relief, and there are very nearly 600,000 who do not get any relief at all. That shows that two persons out of every three manage to keep out of the workhouse somehow. It is wonderful what we have heard in this House that people can do when they are seventy. It is a revelation. The right hon. Gentleman has just talked about a man going to work and of subsidising his employer. I know, as a Poor Law guardian and an administrator, that many and many a sweater has taken account of a poor wretched woman's 2s. 6d. which the guardians have allowed her to help her to pay her rent, and has reduced the price for shirt-making in consequence of that outdoor relief. Yet, the moment you attempt to lift people up and make men and women of them, it is almost a criminal offence. We may surely call these old-age pensions, very old-age pensions. I wonder any Member has the temerity to get up in this House and object to them. I once said, and I repeat, that no man should sit in this House without having served first for ten years as a Poor Law guardian. He would then know something about human nature. It is not perfect. There are a good many sides to it, but most people who apply for relief are very human, and I do not think they very much object to these inquisitorial examinations as to their character. We were challenged by the hon. Member for Preston, who said, "Would you go on any public platform and declare that you are in favour of giving a pension of

5s. per week to a drunken, thriftless, worthless man or woman?" My reply is very prompt to that. A man of seventy with nothing in the world to help him is going to cut a pretty shine on 5s. per week, whether his character be good or bad. What could he do with it? It is not enough to keep him in decency, and he would be well punished for not taking care when he had the opportunity if he had to live on 5s. per week. Who are you, to be continually finding fault? Who amongst you has such a clear record as to be able to point to the iniquity and wickedness of an old man of seventy? I said before, and I repeat, if a man is foolish enough to get old, and if he has not been artful enough to get rich, you have no right to punish him for it. It is no business of yours. It is sufficient for you to know he has grown old. After all, who are these old men and women? Let me appeal to the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone. They are the veterans of industry, people of almost endless toil, who have fought for and won the industrial and commercial supremacy of Great Britain. Is their lot and end to be the Bastille of the everlasting slur of pauperism? We claim these pensions as a right. Ruskin, I think, read you a little homily on the subject—

> "Even a labourer serves his country with his spade and shovel as the statesman does with his pen, or the soldier with his sword."

He has a right to some consideration from the State. Here in a country rich beyond description there are people poverty-stricken beyond description. There can be no earthly excuse for the condition of things which exists in this country to-day. If it be necessary to have a strong Army and Navy to protect the wealth of the nation, do not let us forget that it is the veterans of industry who have created that wealth; and let us accept this as an instalment to bring decency and comfort to our aged men and women.

Mr. HARWOOD (Bolton): I only rise to say a few words and to offer one suggestion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to how I think some of the money for old-age pensions might fairly be obtained. He spoke the other night about robbing the hen roost. I think he should consider where he has the most right to go, and the suggestion I want to make is that I think it would be fair to consider whether some of this money could not be raised by a levy on wages. Do what you will, and take what precautions you will, I believe a great deal of this money will go into the hands of employers in the form of lesser wages paid by them. That was the experience under the Poor Law in the early part of the nineteenth century, and I believe the Leader of the Opposition is quite right when he says you cannot prevent this being in some degree a subvention of wages. Not only when a man is seventy but all through his life you will find there will be a tendency to pay him less because there will not be the necessity to make that provision for his old age which really ought to come out of the wages fund. The hon. Member for Preston was quite right when he said that the right way to solve this question is to pay proper wages, such wages that all classes of the people can save sufficient to provide pensions for themselves. If you provide a pension, you will lower wages. It cannot be helped, and I say it would be a fair thing—and I speak as one who would, to an extent, be affected by it—to make an employer contribute something towards this fund. It would be a fair thing for other reasons. Most employers feel an interest and a duty in regard to the provision for the old age of their employees, but, when this Bill is passed, that sense of duty will be considerably diminished, and many employers will cease to do that which a great many do now. They will gain firstly in wages all through. Whatever you do you cannot prevent this going into the pockets of the employers, and therefore you may fairly take something out of their pockets now. Then it will reduce local taxation by throwing an added burden on the National Exchequer; the consequence will be that employers of labour who are large payers of poor rates will gain very much by the diminished amount to be raised for the poor rate, and therefore they ought to contribute something towards the fund. The other point that I want to name is this. The Bill is passing through the doors of this Chamber out into the world. The outside world cares little for our party struggles and inconsistencies. It will look at the Bill from another point of view and I want us in parting with it to-night to try and share that view. We who have to go out into the world to face our people will have to defend this Bill, and the need for defence will grow greatly as time passes because the burden will increase while the sense of gratitude will diminish. And what defence have we to offer? We do not pass laws like the Medes and Persians that can never be changed. All the details of the Bill may be altered. What is the real principle behind it on which we can take our stand? It is that it is an attempt, perhaps rough, rude, and inefficient, but an attempt to rectify the gross injustice of our present social conditions. Whatever we have done we have failed to distribute wealth fairly between the different classes of the community. Some other plans will have to be tried. People are suggesting Socialism, but at any rate until we have some other plan we are making a rude attempt to put it right. Another thing to be remembered is what Society owes to Labour. Labour is the only thing you can have a stock of at any time without paying for it. Everything else we have to pay for. I hope we shall defend this Bill with pride because it is an attempt to rectify a great wrong and an attempt to put Society on a just basis.

Mr. Harwood.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): The hon. Member for Northumberland earlier in the evening twitted the Unionists with not having the courage to vote against the Bill. I myself and I think most of my friends on this side will agree with me when I say the reason we do not vote against the Bill is that we have long believed that old-age pensions are right and ought to be given if they can be paid for; and, in the second place, after the experience of the last election I do not think we shall be very wise to give Gentlemen on the other side a real good handle for another very large inexactitude. These at all events are my reasons for not voting against the Bill. The Secretary for War the other day said the Bill was simple, effective, and desirable and that the country was baffled and bewildered by it. I suppose that is because it is so very simple. It effectively keeps out a great many people from having old-age pensions who are certainly quite as much entitled to them as the people who are going to have them. It is desirable to have old-age pensions for some people, but the Government have brought in the Bill in about the most undesirable way that they could. I have had letters from the great friendly societies in my division all protesting against it because it will do them a great deal of harm and discourage thrift. The schedule shows how it discourages thrift, because the more a man saves the less he gets from the Government—exactly the opposite of what it ought to be. Under the Bill a vast number of people living in poverty will be heavily taxed to provide old-age pensions. Then you have the 500,000 to 1,000,000 men mentioned by the hon. Member for Glasgow, who are seeking work and not able to find it, and all the people who cannot get work through pllness and have to find food and drink for their families. Included amongst these is the hard case of widows who are struggling to keep themselves and their families out of the workhouse. They will all be heavily taxed to provide old-age pensions for people who, in a certain number of cases, could very well manage to keep out of the workhouse. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in Manchester put the matter very plainly. He said—

> "You had better know what you are paying for. You know now you pay the duty on sugar, exactly what you are paying. Every penny of it goes into the Exchequer, and you will get it by-and-bye in old-age pensions."

So you are making the poorest of the poor pay all their lives up to seventy in order to grant pensions to people who are in many cases better off than the people you are taxing.

And, it being half-past Ten of the clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded, in pursuance of the Order of the House of 17th June, to put forthwith the Questions necessary to dispose of the Business to be concluded this day under the Order.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided.—Ayes, 315; Noes, 10. (Division List No. 182.)

AYES.

Abraham William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert Henry
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran Rowland Hirst
Barry Redmond J. (Tyrone N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs Carlyon
Benn W. (T'w'r Hamlets S. Geo.
Bethell Sir J. H. (Essex Romf'rd
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gretton, John
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde Clarendon
Idris T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)

Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lea,Hugh Cecil(St.Pancras E.)
Leese,SirJosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy(Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(FalkirkB'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh,Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kean John
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan,Francis E.(Leitrim,N.)
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)

Morgan,J.Lloyd(Carmarthen)
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Morse, L. L.
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson.CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson,W.H.M.(Suffolk,Eye)
Philipps,Col.Ivor(S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price,SirRobertJ.(Norfolk,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards,T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n)
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel,Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne)

Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smith,F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Smyth,Thomas F.(Leitrim,S.)
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanier, Beville
Stanley,Hn.A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor,Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas,SirA.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.H.W.(Somerset,E
Thomson,W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinsno, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Vivian, Henry
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley,John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.SirThomasP.
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

NOES.

Banbury,Sir Frederick George
Beach,Hn.MichaelHughHicks
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Cox, Harold

Magnus, Sir Philip
Morpeth, Viscount
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'dUniv.
Walrond, Hon. Lionel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Bowles and Sir Henry Craik.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time accordingly, and passed.

OYSTER AND MUSSEL FISHERY (BAY OF FIRTH) ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL. (BY ORDER.)

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged and Bill withdrawn."

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said he thought that out of courtesy to the Scottish Fishery Board the right hon. Gentleman might have given some reason for the extraordinary course which he had adopted on the present occasion. For many years past this particular oyster water had been, so far as the fishermen were concerned, a place which had not been used. He had never heard of anyone having exposed for sale oysters from this bed, the only occasions when fishermen went out for a few oysters being when people in the neighbourhood were giving dinner parties. Anything he had done in connection with this matter had been entirely in conjunction with the Fishery Board. He had cordially supported the Board, and he had pleasure in acknowledging that the Board had cordially supported him. The Board had seen that a very valuable industry might be prosecuted in that particular water. A great many years ago there were many oysters there, and a number of working men earned a fair living in catching oysters. Hon. Members from Ireland would have no difficulty in realising what this meant in a poor district, for there were many similar districts in that country where practically no wages were paid, and the whole population earned their living by their own exertions either off the land or off the sea. He considered that he was only doing his duty to his constituents in endeavouring to fall in with the Fishery Board in this matter. If this Order had been passed, ten or twenty families would have been enabled to live in comfort, and that result would have more than realised his wildest dreams. Though there had been gross exaggerations in regard to what would happen if the Order were passed, he was not going to occupy the time of the House in going into the opposition to the measure. He thought the Secretary for Scotland might have allowed the Order to go to the vote of the House, so that it might have been decided fairly and squarely without the employment of the Government Whips as Tellers. There was nothing more intolerable for a man in public life than to bear secret and underhand attacks not knowing from whom the attacks emanated. The Secretary for Scotland had been grossly misled by secret reports and opinions, which in common fairness to his Department he should have made known. The right hon. Gentleman had informed him in the Scottish Committee-room, that a petition against the Provisional Order had been received from the burgh of Kirkwall. On making inquiries into this he found that there was no opposition from the Provost or high council of Kirkwall, or from any local authority in the whole constituency. At the Bill Office he found that the petition which purported to come from Kirkwall, and which misled the right hon. Gentleman, had come from, comparatively speaking, a handful of people whose signatures had been obtained no one on earth knew how. The Fishery Board, having applied for this Order, held an inquiry in Kirkwall, and the whole of the evidence against the Order given at the inquiry was of the most flimsy and untrustworthy character. Practically not a single fisherman came forward to oppose the Order. One man who was at the place three times a year for oysters opposed the measure. The opposition came only from persons who occasionally fished oysters for their own amusement. The whole opposition had arisen from local jealousy. He was one of the promoters of the Bill, he admitted; but it was not of his own free will. He did not want to have anything to do with it, except to help an industry to be started, and to subscribe what he could afford for that end; but he agreed to back the Bill when it was represented to him that it would benefit the fishermen and help to re-establish a fishery which had once afforded employment in a district where some industries were much needed. Beyond that he had no interest in the Bill, and any profits to be derived from it were signed away by him to be devoted to the public good. He had been actuated wholly and solely for the public good of his constituency. He would have been glad if the Secretary for Scotland had not adopted the attitude he had taken. It would have been much easier if he had let the matter take its ordinary course and let the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil move the rejection of the Bill. He understood that the principal objection to the Bill was that this fishery should be under the control of the local authority, but the Government knew that the local authorities had declined to undertake this responsibility, and he himself had suggested to the Secretary that if the Order were granted and the local authorities desired to undertake the responsibilities the matter could be arranged on fair terms. The other evening they were condemning trawling in the most unmeasured language; but here was an industry which had been absolutely destroyed and made useless, and all they wanted to do was to restore that industry to enable something to be done for the fishermen. The local authority were frightened about taking it over as it might lead to an increase in the already heavy rates, and so they definitely declined. If one fraction of the allegations that had been made against him with regard to this matter had been true, he was not fit to sit in the House of Commons.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) asked if the hon. Gentleman insinuated that he had made any allegations against him personally.

*MR. CATHCART WASON: Certainly not; but owing to the course taken by the Secretary for Scotland in refusing to allow a free debate and free vote, he was prevented from answering the Member, and after all that had been said such a proceeding could not be justified.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire) said he only intervened for the purpose of suggesting to his hon. friend that debate on this subject might be avoided; and it was for that purpose that he had moved that the Order for the Second Reading should be discharged and the Bill withdrawn. He could assure his hon. friend that he had in no sense whatever any desire to reflect upon his conduct. He was reflecting the general opinion of the House when he said that from no quarter had anyone heard any suggestion whatever which would lead to the idea that the hon. Gentleman had throughout the whole matter acted other than from public-spirited motives, for which he had so honourable a record. The truth was that the opposition to the Bill had not come from any private consideration, but, so far as he was aware, was based entirely on public grounds. The procedure for the Provisional Order was taken under an old Act. He suggested that before taking this step the hon. Gentleman should ascertain whether there was a public authority willing to take the step which he and his colleagues proposed to undertake. Everybody knew a great effort was necessary to induce people to come forward and take up these matters, and that was one reason. Another reason that should further exonerate his hon. friend from any suspicion of interested motives was that these undertakings were most unprofitable. He asked the hon. Gentleman to allow the Bill to be withdrawn, and if no public authority came forward to undertake the public duty in connection with this fishery they would be satisfied, that no other course than that suggested by his hon. friend could be pursued.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE associated himself with the right hon. Gentleman in all that had been said with regard to the hon. Member who had endeavoured to induce an uncommercial company to develop the oyster and mussel fisheries. In regard to the county councils it was true that some time ago the Fishery Board had communicated with the county councils, but the matter was never seriously discussed and nothing was done. Nothing was known to the people of the locality of any attempt being made to interfere with the old time custom. For at least, 400 years small crofters, tradesmen fishermen, and others had had the right to fish in these waters for oysters. Forty-five years ago dredging was introduced and the oyster beds practically destroyed. From that time little fishing had been done. But evidence showed that the oyster beds were again improving. His hon. friend said that no evidence was given by fishermen against the Order, but the point was that no evidence was given for the Order except by the members of the syndicate, and their relatives. The Order proposed to hand over for sixty years eight square miles of water to a small syndicate, and during all that time the public who from time immemorial had a right to fish there for oysters and mussels and to gather bait were to be prohibited from doing so. The oyster beds had been improved by crofters and others, who in their spare time had taken as many as 300 oysters a day and placed them in these beds. One witness said he had planted 1,000 or 1,200 a year. He had taken up this matter to protect the right of these small fishermen and others and to give the public authority an opportunity to carry out a proper supervision of these beds and properly develop them as an oyster fishery. He had received petitions against this Order being passed from landowners, merchants, farmers, fishermen, magistrates and so on, all constituents of the hon. Member. He hoped therefore, the hon. Member and his supporters would not challenge a division, but would allow the course suggested to be taken so as to give the local authorities an opportunity to take the matter over and look after the Bay as a public service.

*MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire) said that as one who had been an opponent of this measure he hoped he might be allowed to associate himself in what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland and the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil in assuring his hon. friend the Member for Orkney that there was nothing whatever of a personal character in the opposition to the Bill. His opposition had been solely on account of the character and proposed terms of the Order, which it proposed to confirm. It would, of course, be out of place to discuss them that night, but if the question had arisen he would have had something to say about the proposed area being too large, about the monopoly for sixty years being too long, and he would have shown how in various ways the privileges of the undertakers were greater and the protection of the public interests less than in those Orders which were regarded as precedents. As, however, the Bill was being withdrawn, there was no occasion to do that, but he desired to take that opportunity of associating himself most heartily with the assurances which had been given to his hon. friend.

Question put, and agreed to.

Order discharged, and Bill withdrawn.

SUPPLY [8TH JULY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £167,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Educational Services, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £1,334,600, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expenses of Naval and Marine Pensions, Gratuities, and Compassionate Allowances, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £868,800, be granted to His Majesty to defray the Expense of Half-pay and, Retired Pay to Officers of the Navy and Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £377,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Civil Pensions and Gratuities, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution postponed.

Second and Third Resolutions agreed to.

Fourth Resolution to be considered upon Thursday next.

Postponed Resolution to be considered upon Thursday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*).

Adjourned accordingly at a quarter after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 10*th July*, 1908.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Brought from the Commons, read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 136.)

House adjourned at five minutes past Three o'clock, till Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 10*th July*, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Provisional Order Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders applicable thereto complied with).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [Lords]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time upon Monday next.

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered; Two Lords Amendments amended, and agreed to.

Remaining Lords Amendments agreed to.

Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [Lords]—Read a second time, and committed.

Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords] (by Order).—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill (by Order).—Read the third time, and passed.

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order.—Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under the Inclosures Acts, 1845 to 1899, relating to Towyn Trewan Common, in the county of Anglesey, presented by Sir Edward Strachey.

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—Ordered, "That, in the case of the Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill, Standing Order 193A be suspended, and the Bill be read the first time."—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Commons Regulations (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill—"To confirm a Provisional Order under the Inclosures Acts, 1845 to 1899, relating to Towyn Trewan Common, in the county of Anglesey," accordingly read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 313.]

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Balsall Heath, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Dursley, London, Port Dinorwic, and Tondu; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Nigg, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Larbert, and Lesmahagow; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Royal London Friendly Society.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Registrar-General has promised to make inquiry into the methods adopted by the committee of management of the Royal London Friendly Society to secure the conversion of the Society into a company; and whether he will make representations to the Registrar-General to refrain from registering any resolution passed at a meeting of the society for the purpose of such conversion until such inquiry has been made.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse*). If the hon. Member will refer to the Answer which I gave to my hon. friend the Member for Skipton last Tuesday he will see that the Answer to the first part of his Question is in the negative. As regards the second part of the Question, I understand that no special resolution has yet been passed, and I cannot give any undertaking beforehand about an event which has not taken place. The whole matter, however, is receiving the most careful consideration, and I can assure the hon. Member that no action will be taken by the Chief Registrar without all due weight being given to any representations he may receive from the various parties interested.

Post Office Servants—Efficiency Reports.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the wording of the form of certificate which has to be given by a superior officer in the Post Office service in reporting on a subordinate has been altered more than once during the past ten years; what was the nature and what was the object of the successive alterations, if any, and were such alterations, if any, the same as those made by other Government departments, or were they, so far as he is aware, made only in respect of the Postal Office staff; and, if they were made only in the Post Office, is there any authority for treating Post Office servants in respect of increments differently from other Civil servants.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The only alteration which has been made in the form of certificate prescribed by Clause 20 of the Order in Council of the 29th November, 1898, consists in the addition of words introduced to guard against the supposition that approved conduct might exist apart from efficient work. I cannot state what steps other Departments have taken to secure that approved conduct is understood to comprise efficiency.

Liquor Licences in the United States.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can state the rates of duty charged on liquor licences in the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York; whether he can give the total sums annually raised by such duties for each class of licence and the number of such licences in these high-licence states; and, if he is not in possession of the facts, whether he would request His Majesty's Embassy at Washington to supplement their Report No. 657, of 1907, by furnishing the information.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The scale of principal payments demanded in the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York, in return for a licence to sell liquor, is as follows:—

Massachusetts.

Class.	Fees per annum.
	£
First Class:—To sell liquor of any kind to be drunk on the premises, not less than -	200
Second Class:—To sell malt liquors, cider, and light wines not containing more than 15 per cent. of alcohol, to be drunk on the premises, not less than - - -	50
Third Class:—To sell malt liquors, or cider, to be drunk on the premises, not less than - - - -	50
Fourth Class:—To sell liquors of any kind not to be drunk on the premises, not less than - - - - -	60

New Hampshire.

Class.	New Hampshire.	Fees per annum.
First Class :— To sell liquors of any kind to be drunk on the premises (to be issued only to innholders).	At the discretion of the State Board of Licensing Commissioners - - - -	Not more than £200, nor less than £5
Second Class :— To sell liquors of any kind in quantities less than five gallons to one person at one time.	In cities having a population of—	£
	40,000 or over - -	240
	18,000 to 40,000 - -	160
	10,000 to 18,000 - -	120
	Under 10,000 - - -	80
	In towns whose population exceeds 2,500 - - -	60
	In all other towns - - -	50
Third Class :— To sell liquors of any kind not to be drunk on the premises.	In cities of over 40,000 people	160
	In cities having between—	
	18,000 and 40,000 people	120
	10,000 and 18,000 people	60
	In cities having a population less than 10,000 - - -	40
	In towns whose population exceeds 2,500 - - -	30
	In all other towns - - -	20
Fourth Class :— To sell malt liquors, cider, or light wines containing not more than 15 per cent. of alcohol, to be drunk on the premises.	In cities of—	
	Over 40,000 people - -	120
	18,000 to 40,000 - -	100
	10,000 to 18,000 - -	80
	Less than 10,000 - -	50
	In towns whose population exceeds 2,500 - - -	40
	In all other towns - - -	30

New York.

Class.	——	Fees per annum. £	s.	d.
First Class :— To sell all liquors to be drunk on the premises, or in quantities of not less than five gallons to be drunk off the premises.	If in a city or borough having a population of—			
	1,500,000 or more - -	240	0	0
	Less than 1,500,000, but more than 500,000 -	195	0	0
	Less than 500,000, but more than 50,000 -	150	0	0
	If in a city or village having more than—			
	50,000, but more than 10,000 - - -	105	0	0
	10,000, but more than 5,000 - - - -	90	0	0
	If in a village having less than 5,000, but more than 1,200 -	60	0	0
	If in a village having less than 1,200 - - - -	30	0	0
Second Class :— To sell all liquors in quantities less than five gallons not to be drunk on the premises.	In a city or borough having a population of—			
	1,500,000 or more - -	150	0	0
	Less than 1,500,000, but more than 500,000 -	120	0	0
	Less than 500,000, but more than 50,000 -	90	0	0
	In a city or village having a population of less than 50,000, but more than 10,000 -	60	0	0
	In a village having a population of—			
	Less than 10,000, but more than 5,000 - - -	30	0	0
	Less than 5,000, but more than 1,200 - - -	22	10	0
	In any other place - - -	15	0	0

Profit on Barrel of Beer.

Mr. STEWART-SMITH (Westmoreland, Kendal): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have fixed a sum of 10s. per barrel, and, if not that sum, then what sum as the profit per barrel of beer in cases of reference to the Commissioners under The Licensing Act, 1904, Section 2.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) No fixed rate of profit per barrel has been adopted by the Commissioners in determining awards of compensation, as profit varies according to circumstances.

Control of the Boyne Navigation Canal.

Mr. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Board of Public Works in Ireland have handed over the control and ownership to a public company of the Boyne Navigation Canal between Drogheda and Navan; what is the name and who are the directors of the company; whether, before parting with the control of a waterway which is essential to the prosperity of the district, the Board imposed conditions on the company binding them to keep the canal navigable and in thorough repair; and if he will furnish the hon. Member for North Meath with a copy of the conditions imposed.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The hon. Member will find all the information for which he asks (with the exception of the names of the present directors of the company, of which the Board of Works has no knowledge) in the Boyne Navigation Transfer Act, 1896 (Local Acts 59 and 60 Vic., cap. xcvi.), and in the agreement scheduled thereto.

Service of Belfast Postal Officials.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General what is the length of service of each officer of the classes of assistant superintendents and overseers in the postal branch and in the telegraph branch at Belfast; how many years service each had on attaining to his present position; and how long each has been in his present position; what is the length of service of the first six sorting clerks and telegraphists in each branch, including and excluding those passed over; and what was the average length of service of officers of this class who, without previous pass over, were promoted to the class of overseers in either branch during the past four years.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) It does not appear to me that the trouble involved in obtaining the Return asked for by the hon. Member would be justified, as the information would not be of any public service.

Unnecessary Overtime of Female Postal Servants.

Mr. WILKIE (Dundee): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that on the 18th and 19th of June, female telegraphists at Dundee were detained on duty until 9.45 p.m.; and, whether, seeing that the Hobhouse Committee recommended that work by the female staff should seldom be prolonged after 8.15 p.m., and in view of the fact that men were available, he will make inquiry with a view to preventing any unnecessary detention of the female staff.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am having inquiry made, and will acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state on how many occasions during the three weeks ended the 6th June a female telegraphist at Belfast, named M'Mullan, was detained on overtime from 6 p.m. till 7 p.m. without opportunity for taking food after 2 p.m.; on how many occasions the same officer was allowed ten minutes for tea during the same period and under the same circumstances; and whether the assistant-superintendent in charge of the instrument room had authority to punish her for over-staying ten minutes on one occasion.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have no knowledge of the circumstances to which the hon. Member refers. The complaint appears to be one that should be made to and dealt with by the postmaster of Belfast.

Imprisonment of Women Suffragists.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether relatives of the women suffragists now in Holloway are being refused permission to see the prisoners; and, if so, whether he will see that this restriction is relaxed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) These prisoners are necessarily treated under the prison rules. If any exceptional reasons for departing from the rules in individual cases are brought to my notice I shall be ready to consider them.

Acquisition of Untenanted Land on the McCartie Estate.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners are now prepared to take steps to acquire the untenanted land on the McCartie estate, county Kerry, which is now for sale in the Land Judge's Court; whether this land is urgently needed for the evicted tenants and for the enlargement of holdings in the district; and whether he will impress on the Commissioners the necessity for taking action to procure the land without delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to my reply to the hon. Member's previous Question of 25th June, when I stated on the authority of the Land Judge's Court that no portion of the estate referred to consists of untenanted land. If, therefore, the Estates Commissioners should purchase the estate, they cannot buy any portion of it as untenanted land.

Deductions from Salary of Teacher of Meelick National School.

MR. J. MURPHY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a sum of £7 was deducted from the salary of the teacher of Meelick National school, Eyrecourt, county Galway (Roll No. 4974) for the quarter ending the 30th September, 1907, because the average fell to 9·4 owing to the weather being very wet and the roads of the district impassable with floods; whether he is aware that the manager wrote twice to the Commissioners for the balance of the salary so deducted, and was refused; and whether, in view of the fact that the average for the year was 11·1 and that the fall in the September quarter was due to exceptional causes, he will see that the Commissioners pay the teacher the balance of the salary deducted; and whether he will get the rules (115, e, f,) of the Commissioners, under which this action was taken, removed or modified so that stoppages of salary will not be made when the fall in average was due to exceptional causes.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Under the rules the deduction in question is mandatory; and it is provided by Rule 115 (f) that, in the case of schools of the class to which the Meelick National school belongs, no claim for special consideration can be entertained on account of a reduction of the average attendance due to exceptional causes. I cannot say at present whether it would be possible to have this rule modified; but I will look into the matter.

Transfer of Belfast Police Officers.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state under what circumstances eight Protestant police officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary stationed in Leopold Street Barracks, Belfast, are to be transferred to counties; and if, before these transfers are carried out, he will order a sworn inquiry to be held, and thereby give an opportunity to the officers concerned to make their defence.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that, in the interests of discipline, he has ordered the transfer of six men from Leopold Street Station to other districts. Five of the men are Protestants, but the question of religion had no bearing on the matter. The Answer to the latter part of the Question is in the negative. The entire matter is one for the decision of the Inspector-General.

Land Purchase Advance—Case of Mr. Richard Wallace.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the total amount of the advances for the purpose of land purchase already made or recommended in the case of Mr. Richard Wallace, of Belfield, Shinrone, King's County, tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are unable to identify the particular case referred to in the Question unless fuller particulars are given.

Congestion in Ireland.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down. E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the intention of the Government to proceed with any legislation dealing with the Report on congestion in Ireland; and, if so, will it be prior to or after the Autumn Recess.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have nothing to add to the reply which was given to the hon. and gallant Member's Question on this subject on 4th June last.

Irish Universities Bill.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state definitely the dates on which it is intended to take the Report stage and Third Reading of the Irish Universities Bill now reported from Standing Committee C.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Report stage will be taken on the 23rd and 24th July, and the Third Reading will be taken, as Second Order, on 25th July.

Condition of County Meath.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, at the recent commission of assize for county West Meath held in Mullingar, Mr. Justice Gibson was refused any report as to the general condition of the county with regard to peace and order by the officers of the police, that the report handed to him was confined to specially reported crimes only, although in other counties information was given to the judge dealing with cattle-driving, boycotting, and other forms of similar intimidation; and can he state why this information was withheld in this instance.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that Mr. Justice Gibson was supplied with the full returns of crime for the county, in the usual form, and that, in accordance with the established practice, the county inspector was present to afford any explanation of the returns and to give any further information as to the state of the county in his possession which the learned Judge might require. I am not aware of any foundation for the suggestion that information was withheld from Mr. Justice Gibson, and, so far as I am aware, the learned Judge himself has made no suggestion to that effect.

Reinstatement of John Dorgan of Graigebeg.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from John Dorgan, of Graigebeg, in the Poor Law union of Croom, in the county of Limerick, who was evicted by the landlord, Grady F. Conyers, from his farm in the year 1883 for the non-payment of a rent of £100, the Poor Law valuation being £33; whether the landlord's son has signed an agreement to purchase this holding under the Land Act, 1903; and, if so, what action do the Commissioners propose to take in reference to it; and how and when do they intend to deal with the evicted tenants application.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received from John Dorgan an application for reinstatement as representative of his deceased father, who was the evicted tenant. The tenant's interest in the evicted holding was acquired by an uncle of the landlord, who subsequently assigned it to his son, and a purchase agreement signed by the latter has since been lodged. The Commissioners have no power to interfere in the matter, but Dorgan's application for a holding will be considered upon the distribution of any untenanted lands which the Commissioners may acquire in the district.

Grants to Hugh Madden of Oristown.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Hugh Madden, of Oristown, Kells, county Meath, to whom the Estates Commissioners recently gave a small farm on the Farrell estate, at Robertstown, has applied for a grant to enable him to build a residence; and if his application will be favourably considered.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received the application and will consider it in due course.

SELECTION STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir **William Brampton Gurdon** reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Colonel Sir Ivor Herbert; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Ellis Davies.

Sir **William Brampton Gurdon** further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C: Mr. Ellis Davies.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP K).

Sir **George White** reported from the Committee on Group K of Private Bills; That the parties opposing the Local Government Board Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill had stated that the evidence of Hugh Worthington Adams, coroner for the North-West Division of Staffordshire, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Hugh Worthington Adams do attend the said Committee on Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Hugh Worthington Adams do attend the Committee on Group K of Private Bills on Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP K).

Sir **George White** reported from the Committee on Group K of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties concerned, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

ANTICIPATORY MOTIONS.
A QUESTION OF PROCEDURE.

Mr. Speaker called upon Mr. Asquith to move the following Resolution of which notice had been given: "That, until the adjournment for the autumn holidays, Government business be not interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the sittings of the House, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed; that, at the conclusion of Government business each day, Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put; and that no Motions be made to bring in Bills under Standing Order No. 11."

***Mr. Evelyn Cecil** (Aston Manor), rising to a point of order, said: I have a Motion down on the Paper for 31st July which proposes to discuss the undesirableness of doing the very things which the Prime Minister now wishes to do. I consider that my Motion is the more important because of the unprecedented abuse which the Government have made of the closure procedure of the House this session. In the "Manual of Procedure," issued under the high authority of the Clerk at the Table, it is stated that—

> "A Motion must not anticipate a matter already appointed for the consideration of the House, or a Motion of which notice has been already given and not withdrawn."

I imagine it will not be disputed that the Prime Minister's Motion, at any rate, anticipates the matter which I desire to discuss, and would respectfully submit that my Motion has been already appointed for the consideration of the House because it appeared on the Notice Paper on 23rd June. I moved it after eleven o'clock, it was objected to, and then on my request, you from the Chair fixed it for 31st July, I think that this part of my contention is covered by the ruling of Mr. Speaker Brand on 27th May, 1875, and there are other rulings also which seem to bear on the subject. Mr. Speaker Brand said—

> "It is irregular to propose any Motion which anticipates discussion of a matter already appointed for consideration by the House."

I should also like to submit to you, in relation to the statement in the "Manual of Procedure," that the Prime Minister's Motion anticipates my

Motion, which is one of which notice has been already given and not withdrawn. It seems to me that my Motion comes precisely under these terms, for I have given notice of the Motion, it deals with a matter the Prime Minister now wishes to deal with, and I have not withdrawn my Motion. I find that Mr. Speaker Denison on 13th July, 1871, said—

> "The hon. Baronet the Member for Portsmouth (Sir James Elphinstone) is not in order in introducing on the present Motion questions which would arise upon a future Motion of which notice has been given."

I think the Prime Minister is bound to introduce on this Motion a subject which would properly arise on the Motion of which I have given notice, and under these circumstances I very respectfully submit to you that the Prime Minister's Motion to-day is not in order.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member was kind enough to give me notice that he intended to raise this point, and I have gone as carefully into it as I can and looked through the precedents. I am clearly of opinion that one notice of Motion cannot act as a block on another notice of Motion. If so the whole business of the House would come to a standstill. Where there are two notices of Motion dealing with the same matter the fact that one stands for to-day, and the other stands for to-morrow does not prevent to-day's Motion coming on, and I am sure that the hon. Member will search the books and the records in vain to find a case of that kind. The hon. Member has called my attention to two cases in which my predecessors have laid down a rule. Dealing first with the one of 27th May, 1875, where, when a notice of Motion on the subject of strangers present at debate was brought forward, Mr. Speaker Brand said it was his duty to inform the House that by the rules of the House it was irregular to propose any Motion which anticipated discussion upon matters already appointed for the consideration of the House. That I conceive to be, so far as it goes, a perfectly accurate statement of the rule against anticipation. In my opinion, the added phrases which appear in the "Manual" go really somewhat beyond the rule, as laid down from the Chair in former days. Then the hon. Member says that his Motion is in regard to a matter already appointed for the consideration of the House. There I do not agree with him. The hon. Member did not move his Motion. He rose in his place and was prepared to move it, and was going to move it, but, objection being taken, the Motion could not come on. If the hon. Member will refer to the Votes and Proceedings he will find no record whatever of the House having ever fixed the date for 31st July. The hon. Member fixed his own day. When he called out "31st July," I so informed the clerks at the Table, but if he looks at the Votes and Proceedings he will find that there is no record of his having moved the Motion, and, indeed, it could not have been put from the Chair because there was no seconder, and until a Motion is seconded, it cannot be put from the Chair. Therefore the House was never seized of it and the House has never appointed a particular day for its consideration. Therefore the Motion of the hon. Member does not come within the ruling of Mr. Speaker Brand of 27th May, 1875. With regard to the ruling of Mr. Speaker Denison of 13th July, 1871, Mr. Speaker Denison said—

> "The hon. Baronet the Member for Portsmouth is not in order in introducing on the present Motion questions which would arise upon a future Motion of which notice has been given."

That was clearly not an identical matter. Of course, the rule is perfectly clear that on a Motion for the adjournment, either upon a matter of urgency, or for the holidays, a matter of which notice has been given, even although it has never come before the House and no day has been appointed by the House, a matter which it is proposed to raise at some future time for debate—cannot be discussed on a Motion for adjournment. That is a well-recognised rule which has been acted upon a great many times, and that is the case to which the hon. Member refers, for he will see that the case of 13th July, 1871, was a Motion for the adjournment of the House. That is very often the case. I will not say it is of daily or weekly occurrence, but it is of monthly occurrence in this House. I hope I have made this matter clear to the House. It is perfectly clear to myself that in the case of two competing Bills dealing with the same subject — one cannot block the other; two competing Motions dealing with the same subject—one cannot block the other; but if discussion has been entered upon on one of those Motions and a day fixed by the House, that fact would act as a block against the second one being discussed.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I would like, Mr. Speaker, to ask one or two Questions, merely for the purpose of elucidating the ruling which you have been good enough to give to the House. I do not know whether your attention has been called to a ruling of Mr. Speaker Denison of 25th June, 1871, in which he says—

> "There is a Rule of the House that when a matter has been expressly set down for consideration no hon. Member can anticipate it by raising a discussion on the subject."

That certainly would appear in its terms to cover the case raised by my hon. friend to-day. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] When a matter has been expressly set down, I submit to you, Sir, that is a reason why on Motions for adjournment under Standing Order 10 and on Motions for adjournment for holidays, no discussion has been allowed in respect of any matter in respect of which a Motion stands on the Paper of the House, and it does not matter whether any date has been fixed or whether the Motion merely stands for an early date. With regard to the question raised by my hon. friend as to 27th May, 1875, I would point out that there were then three Motions on the Paper, only one of which was moved by Lord Hartingdon, as he then was, and the other two were merely given notice of, but never entered upon. In the course of the discussion on the first Motion a difficulty arose, and it was adjourned until a particular day. Nothing was said about the other Motions, nor was the House seized of them. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker Brand said the mere fact of the existence of these Motions precluded another hon. Member from moving a Motion dealing with the same subject. I merely desire to submit this point.

*MR. SPEAKER: With regard to the first Question, I do not see that it i in any way inconsistent. The ruling there was that when a matter had been expressly set down for consideration no hon. Member could anticipate it by raising a discussion on that subject. I construe the words there in the same sense as they were construed by Mr. Speaker Brand. "A matter already appointed for consideration by the House" means by the House itself—not a Member merely naming a day. With regard to the Question arising on 27th May, 1875, there were three Motions of which Lord Hartington gave notice; and in his speech he said he proposed to deal with all three together. He made a speech covering the whole ground. It is perfectly true only one Motion was put from the Chair, and therefore it might very well be urged that the second Resolution, which had not been entered upon or discussed at all, could not operate as a block. But Mr. Speaker Brand was careful upon that occasion, I observe, to say that the three Motions, although separate, read together constituted the order of the day, and, if so, it is not for me to say my predecessor was wrong, as the facts were all before him; and I daresay he thought there was sufficient connection between the three Resolutions really to constitute them one Order.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

(GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.)

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.), in moving the Motion of which he had given notice in regard to the business of the House, said: The Motion which stands on the Paper in my name is one which we have for a long time been accustomed to have moved at this season of the year; but before the House is asked to assent to it it may reasonably require to be informed both as to the length of time over which it is meant the suspension of our ordinary rules should extend and what matters legislative or otherwise are intended to be brought within the scope of its operation. May I say by way of preface, speaking for myself, I am strongly opposed to the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule, except with the general consent of the House, or in case of real necessity. I think the length of time which we spend, not only in this Chamber, but also in the discharge of the growingly heavy work which is assigned to Committees, is quite a sufficient tax upon the energies and the strength of even the most zealous Member amongst us. I think I may fairly claim that during the past session there have been as few extensions of our normal sittings as, perhaps, in any session in recent times. Therefore I should not propose this Motion now unless I thought it one for the general convenience of the House and a matter of necessity. Some weeks ago I expressed a hope that this part of the session—an autumn sitting being inevitable—might be brought to a close in July. I am sorry to say that that anticipation will not be precisely realised, but it will be realised as nearly as may be, because we propose to ask the House to adjourn on Saturday, 1st August. It follows, therefore, that there are now only three available weeks of Parliamentary time before the end of this stage of the session. In order to submit to the consideration of the House the manner in which the Government propose that the time of the House should be occupied, I may perhaps say one word by may of general survey of the position of public business. Whatever judgment may be passed as to the character and quality of the work done I think everyone will admit that this has been an extremely and exceptionally busy session. If we make allowance for the inevitable loss of time that occurred immediately before Easter, I think the amount of work done reflects the greatest credit upon the industry of all sections and parties in the House. We have passed already—I am speaking now of Government business alone, for there have been very valuable private measures dealt with—we have already disposed of two Scottish Bills, the Prosecution of Offences Bill, two Public Health Bills, and, last night, the Old-Age Pensions Bill. The Children Bill, after a most exhaustive examination — and I do not think any Standing Committee has ever done its work better—has now reached the Report stage. The Irish Universities Bill is in a similar position. The Scottish Education Bill in the course of next week will also have passed through the Committee stage. The Port of London Bill is under the consideration of a Joint Committee of both Houses, and, though I am afraid we cannot anticipate that we shall finally dispose of it before the adjournment, I think it certainly will be passed during the autumn sitting. That shows a great deal of legislative work done by the House and a number of measures of first-class importance either disposed of or on the eve of passing to another place. The practical question now is, How are we to dispose of the three weeks that still remain before 1st August ? Let me, first of all, enumerate the Bills which must pass into law before that day. We must dispose of the financial business by getting the remainder of Supply, and then the Appropriation Bill and the Finance Bill, through the Committee and Third Reading. Next we hope to dispose finally, so far as this House is concerned, of the Irish Universities Bill. Then there is the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill which must necessarily be passed at this season of the year. There are the Fatal Accidents Bill, the Committee stage of the Patents and Designs Bill, the Housing of Working Classes (Ireland) Bill in the Report stage, which we hope to get through this afternoon ; and there are two or three other small Bills it will be necessary to get through, the Registration Bill in reference to the alteration of date of the Revising Barristers Court and the Friendly Societies Bill included. There are other small Bills we hope to get through, and these supply the main reason for asking the House to suspend the rule. It is desirable that we should get them through, and I hope we shall do so with general consent. I do not ask for the suspension for the purpose of pressing controversial business ; that, I think, would be an abuse of the privilege we are asking for. But it will be a great convenience if at this period of the session we are able to dispose of measures which meet with general assent or are of Departmental importance, and are not at the mercy of one or two Members who, for some reason, by their speeches, may prevent progress being made. There are three Bills, I may mention, as coming within the category it is desirable we should pass, the Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill, the Post Office Savings Bank Bill, and the Telegraph (Construction) Bill. A number of small Bills, mainly relating to Ireland, such as the Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply Bill, I hope the House will allow us to pass before we adjourn. This completes the legislative business to which we shall ask the attention of the House during the next three weeks concluding this period of the session. This is not the occasion to anticipate the business for the autumn session; but the House will observe that I have left open a reference to a particularly important addition to our legislative proposals in regard to the Licensing Bill. We propose before we adjourn on 1st August to submit a Procedure Resolution for the allocation of time for that Bill and to devote two days to the Committee stage. Further progress with that Bill and with other measures we leave over for the autumn session. I do not think the programme I have outlined makes an excessive demand on the time of the House for the next three weeks. It will involve one effective Saturday sitting—there will be a sitting on Saturday, 1st August—the Motion for adjournment being made the day before—when we will take the Appropriation Bill; but it involves one effective Saturday sitting—the last Saturday in July. Unless we have this, there will be great difficulty in getting the Third Reading of the Irish Universities Bill, which I am sure a large majority of the House—on this side certainly—will be glad to dispose of. I regret to propose Saturday sittings, but, with this exception, I do not think the programme I have sketched makes an excessive call on the time and patience of Members, and I hope with this explanation the House will assent to the Motion I now make.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, until the adjournment for the autumn holidays, Government Business be not interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the sittings of the House, and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed; that, at the conclusion of Government Business each day, Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without Question put; and that no Motions be made to bring in Bills under Standing Order No. 11."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I am not disposed to quarrel with that part of the right hon. Gentleman's statement in which he has told us that the actual number of additional hours we are asked to sit before 1st August is not excessive. Toward the end of July, or, to speak more correctly, toward the last few weeks of the session, the House is accustomed to lengthen the hours it is usual to sit at other times; and, as the Prime Minister has given a distinct pledge that he means to take no controversial business, I do not think he has gone beyond demands which have been made by his predecessors so far as the actual strain on the time and attention of Members is concerned, during the few weeks before the adjournment. The right hon. Gentleman is well aware that the occasion when a Motion is made for the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule in July has for a long series of years afforded a fitting opportunity for comment upon the work and action of the Government. I do not mean to go in detail over this large and fruitful field, but there are one or two observations I must make. The first relates to the amount of legislative business the Government insists upon the House dealing with, and the results of their demand. It has been one of the customary and familiar taunts—so customary and familiar that it has rather lost its sting now—that anybody who protests from this side of the House against the overcrowding of the Government's legislative programme does so because he does not want any legislation at all. Well, there is a great deal of proposed legislation I think undesirable, but it is not with the general proposition what legislation we want that I now wish to deal, but with the manner in which legislation is conducted. I would ask the Government and the House generally whether they seriously think that the task imposed is one the House can carry out effectively? It is perfectly natural that a new House of Commons, eager for legislation, should overrate the value of positive legislation and underrate the injury to Parliamentary methods by overcrowding the Order Paper. The protest I now venture to make I feel I could not have made with the same effect to an audience which would have been entirely unsympathetic in an earlier period of the life of this House; but I ask now, is it not evident to the most casual observer that if we attempt to deal with so many Bills as we are asked to deal with, those Bills are not all properly discussed and are not discussed by people who ought to discuss them? The system of Grand Committees, immensely developed as it had been by the present Government, has many potentialities in it, and I by no means condemn it unreservedly; but it is liable to two great evils, the imposition of undue burdens on Members who serve on these Committees, preventing them from attending the more general discussions within these walls; the other is that a certain number of Members are excluded, practically excluded, though not by Standing Orders, from taking part in what is considered by many the most important stage in our discussion of large measures. I say nothing about the Leader of the Opposition, whose services may not be required or important on these Bills. I never attend the Committees—I have not time—but it is quite impossible that anybody holding the office of Prime Minister can take any part in guiding deliberations in Grand Committee. That is a great evil. I do not attend Grand Committees. It would be impossible for me to attend here if I did; the same disability applies to the Prime Minister; and, I am told, also applies to the Law Officers of the Crown. I do not say that they absent themselves from Grand Committees, but I do distinctly say that the work the House has been accustomed to get from the Law Officers by way of advice and assistance on legal points cannot be given by those officers in Grand Committee, and either a great deal of work must be done without their assistance or the number of Law Officers must be increased; there is no other alternative. I doubt whether any of the older Members of the House or new Members who have been working at the conduct of legislation since the general election will think I am in the least overstating my case when I say that the amount of business sent to Grand Committees has had the double effect of overworking a large number of the most laborious and energetic Members of the House, and has excluded from an important stage—some would say the most important stage—in Parliamentary proceedings some Members of the House whose advice and assistance has always been given in Committee of the Whole House, and is not and cannot be given in Grand Committee. That is one result of overcrowding legislation, and the other is that we are working now practically under a permanent system of closure. I do not mean to go into that question now. The Prime Minister has informed us that he intends to move one of his habitual customary Closure Resolutions a few weeks hence in reference to the Licensing Bill, and then I shall revert to the history of the system and its effect on Parliamentary proceedings. But nobody, on whichever side of the House he may sit, can contemplate the proceedings during the last few weeks on the Pensions Bill with entire satisfaction. Discussion in this House has enormous value in modifying and improving Bills, but it has been hampered, truncated, and in some cases wholly destroyed by the system which has now become not merely familiar, but almost universal in the hands of the present Administration. I will say no more on this theme now. I shall have to return to it again. ["Hear, hear."] I do not know who it was who ironically cheered my statement; but I am quite certain that the hon. Member, if he habitually attends the proceedings, will know that every word I have said is absolutely justified. I do not say more on that point now, but I now come to another point which is strictly germane to the general conduct of business and one on which there will be no very convenient opportunity of saying anything to the House in the future—I mean the conduct of Supply. I may be permitted to remind old Members of the House and to inform new Members of one or two facts which they should bear in mind in considering this question. Our present Supply rule was brought forward by the late Government, and it introduced a profound, and, I am inclined to think, almost unqualified, reform into our procedure. I do not say it is unqualified—no change is unqualified—but I am quite sure it has few defects and has been of enormous advantage to the general work of the House. Before the Supply rule was introduced the amount of time that might be taken up by Supply was only limited by the powers of endurance of individuals Members of the House. Supply was accumulated in great blocks at the end of the session, when the less industrious Members had gone to more agreeable occupations. It was carried on night after night in the small hours, and, while there was an immense expenditure of time, of temper, and of health, there was really no adequate discussion of the matters brought before the House. The new rule did two things—it limited the number of days that could be devoted to the ordinary Supply of the year to a number between twenty and twenty-three, and it provided that those days should be distributed week by week through the whole course of the session. The result of this was that there was no topic on which it was proper to criticise the Government for the discussion of which an opportunity could not be found; and instead of the Government being able, at the cost of the time and health of Members, to get through all this bulk of matter at the end of August, they were obliged to stand face to face with the House of Commons, week by week, and to stand the shock of hostile criticism. So much for the Standing Order. But outside the actual terms of the Standing Order there was an understanding arrived at across the floor of the House by the then Government that the actual topic to be selected week by week for discussion in Supply was, broadly speaking, to be determined by the critics of the Government on either side, but in the main by the Opposition to the Government. That rule was most carefully maintained under the late Government. Every week there was a consultation between the Government and the Opposition Whips, not as to what Supply it would be convenient to the Government to put down, but what Supply it would be convenient to the Opposition to discuss. In other words, the Government, week by week, gave the Opposition an opportunity of selecting the topics most agreeable to the Opposition, and therefore, by natural inference, most disagreeable to the Government. That was the understanding, and as the Government and all those Members who have served in other Parliaments are well aware, that understanding was carried out in the letter. But I have seen with some alarm a desire on the part of the Government to evade this understanding. Perhaps that word conveys an implication I do not wish to make. I will say that the Government have shown a desire to escape from that understanding, the maintenance of which is, I am convinced, the only condition on which the Supply rule can be thoroughly and effectively worked. I understand that the reason in more than one case when we have asked for certain Votes to be put down and our suggestion has not been acted upon—I understand the reason in many cases has been that a new Minister had come into office and that he was not competent to deal with details which a Minister in charge of a Vote must have at his fingers' ends if he is to answer criticism properly. I quite agree that the Prime Minister has been in some difficulty in that regard. There have been a great many changes of office, and it is perfectly true that a Minister suddenly brought into a wholly new office neither can nor ought to be expected to make himself, within a few days, master of all the details of questions which the Opposition may legitimately discuss, or to know how to answer the innumerable points which may be raised by industrious criticism in Supply. I do not wish to press this point beyond what is fair to the Government, and if the right hon. Gentleman tells me, as I hope he will, that he entirely recognises the historic accuracy of the account I have given of the original arrangement, that he means to carry it out in the letter and in the spirit, and, further, that the only thing that stood in his way and prevented him from carrying it out has been the changes in the *personnel* of Ministers in charge of the different Votes, I shall say no more; but I shall expect that next session the old method will again be put in force, and that the weekly criticism of the Government will be arranged on lines which will give proper opportunities to the Opposition. There is one other point connected with Supply which has nothing whatever to do with any arrangement under the Supply Rule, but it has to do with a practice which is now becoming habitual with the Government, namely, the habit of choosing the inferior limit of possible days for Supply rather than the superior limit. Under the Supply rule not more than twenty-three days can be given to Supply, and not less than twenty; but it rests with the Government of the day to say which limit shall be adopted. So far as I remember, there was only one session under the late Government in which they did not give the extra three days for Supply; but I believe that in two out of the three years of the present Government's existence the minimum number and not the maximum was given. I do not know what the justification of that is. The right hon. Gentleman cannot deny that there are a great many topics that still require discussion in Supply, and for the discussion of which an opportunity could be found if the Government would give twenty-three days to Supply instead of twenty. If twenty days only are to be allotted, we have only five days remaining, and within those five days must be discussed, or left undiscussed, the Home Office Vote, one of the most important Votes, as I think everybody will agree; the Education Vote, which not only involves a sum of nearly £14,000,000, but touches on subjects which create equal interest in every part of the House; the Board of Trade Vote, and the Local Government Board Vote, which, next to the Home Office Vote, probably touches most nearly the social life of the people. The Local Government Board Vote was not discussed at all last year. Is it going to be hitched in somewhere among the Votes of immense importance I have ventured to bring to the notice of the House? Then there is the Post Office Vote, involving £18,000,000, and we have really not yet had any adequate discussion of the Colonial Office Vote or the Foreign Office Vote. It is true there was a discussion on the day before the Whitsuntide holidays on the Foreign Office Vote, but that discussion was not devoted to a general survey of the foreign policy of the Government, but was rigidly restricted to the one topic of His Majesty's visit to Russia. That was a separate discussion which might have been taken on the Motion for the Adjournment for the holidays or on a Motion for the Adjournment of the House, and it was only put down for discussion on the Foreign Office Vote for convenience. Thus the Foreign Office Vote has not really been touched, and certainly there are questions which ought to be raised upon it. With this limitation of time the exclusion of some topics is, I quite admit, an inevitable result of the Supply rule, even when the number of Supply days is limited to twenty-three. There must be topics every year which cannot be discussed; but when you limit the number of Supply days to twenty, then it is not open to the Government to say they have no more time. They have more time, and I think they ought to give it. If the right hon. Gentleman is going to ask the House to meet again in October, why can he not give up one of the days which are to be devoted to the Committee stage of the Licensing Bill? That does not endanger such prospects of life as the Licensing Bill may possess. The guillotine Resolution will presumably limit the amount of time we give to it, and whether that guillotine Resolution be moved at the end of July or on 12th October makes absolutely no difference to the prospects of the Bill in Committee and on the Report stage in this House. I remember asking a friend of mine why the Government were going to cut the discussion of the Licensing Bill in half. The answer given was that the Government thought it necessary to prove their sincerity to the country, and their sincerity could not be adequately proved unless they took some vigorous action before they went to the seaside. Surely it is quite vigorous action enough to pass a guillotine Resolution which says that the House is not to discuss the Bill in Committee stage for more than nineteen days, and with that mark of Napoleonic vigour, I should have thought the Government might really be content, and there would at all events be one more day for this much needed work of Supply. The House will see that, broadly speaking, my criticisms come to this. I do not complain of the actual strain of the work which the Government are going to throw upon us before 31st July. I do say, however, that, by curtailing our means of criticism and by overwhelming us with legislation which we are never allowed to deal with in detail, they are inflicting an injury, I hope not a permanent, but a serious injury, upon the efficiency and credit of the House.

MR. ASQUITH: Perhaps it will be convenient if I at once rise to make a short reply to the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman. My omission to mention the date at which it is proposed that the House should resume was not accidental, but intentional, because I hoped we might get through this discussion without any allusion to so painful a topic. I may say that we propose that the House should meet on Monday, 12th October. [Cries of "Oh!"] Apparently I was not wrong in my anticipations as to the feelings which such a topic would excite. The right hon. Gentleman's first point was that the manner in which the system of Grand Committees is worked imposes an excessive strain on Members generally. In the next place, he said that it excludes from an important area of discussion Members who would be very glad and are well qualified to take part in such discussion. Of course there are evils and drawbacks as well as advantages in every change of procedure, but I am, I believe, expressing the general opinion of the House when I say that our new rule, that under normal conditions Bills should go to a Standing Committee instead of being discussed in Committee here, has worked advantageously. I do not say that it ought to be applied to Bills such as the Old-Age Pensions Bill, or the Licensing Bill, or to measures of a highly controversial kind. [AN HON. MEMBER: The Coal Mines Bill.] I think that is a fair case; when once the principle is adopted it is a mere question of adjustment of detail. Take a case like that of the Children Bill. That Bill has 130 clauses, and there would be no possibility of its passing at all if the Committee Stage had to be taken in this House. The Scottish Education Bill is a very complicated and difficult measure. If we had to discuss it in Committee of the Whole House a large number of Members would take no part in the matter except to come in and vote on questions they do not understand, and we should abstract no insignificant fraction from the general legislative time of the House. So long as the system of Grand Committees is not abused for the purpose of removing from the floor of the House measures which in their details as well as principle are highly controversial, I think there is a balance of gain rather than loss. The right hon. Gentleman complains of the use made of the guillotine. I said, and every one on this Bench said some years ago, stronger things than the right hon. Gentleman has said. I do not retract or repent what I have said. I have never regarded the guillotine as anything better than a necessary evil. It is impossible to discriminate by an order of the House between the relative degrees of importance and interest of different amendments, and the guillotine must exclude some important topics. I hope we may to some extent mitigate that by recasting the Report stage and securing on the Report stage that matters not adequately discussed in Committee should first receive attention. The guillotine is an evil, but it is a necessary evil, until you can get some machinery by which, with the general consent of the House, the amount of time to be allocated to the topics to be discussed on the consideration of Bills can be determined impartially instead of depending entirely on the Government majority of the day. I am afraid that is a counsel of perfection. The right hon. Gentleman knows the difficulties well. I do not say he invented the guillotine, but he perfected its workmanship and widened the sphere of its operations, and we are, after all, but lame and halting followers of the right hon. Gentleman. It does not matter which Party is in power; the guillotine will remain, I venture to predict, a permanent part of the machinery of this House, and its use will become more frequent unless some such arrangement as I have indicated is made. I pass to what the right hon. Gentleman said on the subject of Supply. I assure him that there has been no intention of escaping from the understanding which was come to when this rule was framed, that it is not for the Government, but for the critics of the Government, to determine what particular topics should be taken in Committee of Supply. The regular Opposition have clearly the first claim to be consulted. So long as the Patronage Secretary and I hold our present positions there will be no indisposition to consult the right hon. Gentleman in these matters. But there are other sections of the House to be considered also. There is the Irish Party, who have, by long, unbroken custom, been entitled to a voice as to when Irish Supply should be taken and as to what particular topics should be discussed. My colleagues from Scotland have an equal right in regard to Scottish Supply. On questions of general policy there are Members sitting in another quarter of the House who certainly would complain—and I think with reason—if their wishes were not taken into account. The Government has no interest whatever in themselves choosing topics in Supply, still less in choosing the topics in Supply in which their own friends are interested. My experience is that when you are in Committee of Supply it is the wounds of your friends that are most to be feared, and I am not sure that by this convenient convention, by which the Opposition are masters of the situation in the choice of topics, we do not escape more inconvenient situations than otherwise. As regards the number of days given to Supply, we are giving the minimum of twenty provided by the rule. So long as the requirements of the rule are satisfied, I do not think it is the function of the Opposition to determine the number of days. I think there we must consult the general wishes of the House. My belief is that the preponderance of opinion in the House is that Members will be more profitably occupied in the manner I have indicated than they would be if one, two, or three more days were given to Supply. Unfortunately it must happen with an Administration carrying on business under our rules of procedure that a large number of important topics must remain undiscussed in Supply every session. When this rule was first introduced it was on of our favourite topics on platforms to point out the enormous sums of money which, under the operation of the guillotine, were voted away on the last two nights without a word of criticism. As to the Licensing Bill, the right hon. Gentleman ingenuously suggests that we should start the Committee stage now and postpone the guillotine Resolution till the autumn session.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, no; the other way about.

Mr. ASQUITH: Well, he has made both suggestions if I understand him rightly.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is a small matter, but I should prefer two more days for Supply. If the right hon. Gentleman wants to give an earnest of sincerity to the country, I suggest that he should move the guillotine Motion before the adjournment and take the whole of the Committee stage in the autumn.

Mr. ASQUITH: I think he did make the other suggestion, but I do not press that. I merely wish to point out that if we began the first clause without the guillotine I am sure we should not get beyond the first line before the adjournment for the autumn recess. I think that I have endeavoured to answer the main points raised by the right hon. Gentleman, and I do not in the least complain of his raising them. It will appear from what has been said that if we are to adjourn, as I take it the House will wish to do, on 1st August, we must adopt this Motion and distribute the time that remains between now and the adjournment in the manner proposed. There is only one other point that I ought to have mentioned in my opening remarks, and which may strike the House as one of importance, and that is that we propose to adopt and star as our own two private Members' Bills, a course which I think the Government ought never to take save where the Bills are in an exceptional position. With regard to these Bills both are in an exceptional position. The first is the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill, which is a very important measure which has been made the subject of an arrangement between the Chief Secretary, the Treasury, and the promoters of the Bill. It has to pass through the Report stage, and will not really take up any substantial part of the time still remaining. The other Bill is one in which the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London is interested. I hope the House will not suspect anything in the nature of a corrupt bargain, although the circumstances seem to be suspicious. But in point of fact, even if the hon. Baronet were not, as he is, the father and sponsor of this Bill, I think that the Government would have felt bound to adopt it in view of its exceptional character. It is the Wild Birds Bill, a measure which is absolutely indispensable in the interests of humanity and in order to put an end to a most cruel practice. I am quite certain that it cannot occupy more than a very few minutes.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) said he had no objection to what had fallen from the Prime Minister with regard to the two Bills of which the Government proposed to take charge, but in reference to the allocation of time he would point out that only two days had been allotted to Irish Estimates. Although it was the practice to consult hon. Members below the gangway, he ventured to say that it would be fair to consult also the Irish Unionist representatives, who were not an unimportant section of the House, and who felt that a third day should be given to the Chief Secretary's Vote, which this year apparently was to be included among those to which no time would be allotted.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said he wanted to protest as a private Member, not against the number of days given to Supply by the system established under the late Government some years ago, but against the practice which had arisen of using Supply as a means of attacking the Government. He thought that the House had lost a great deal of power and of influence in the country by not looking more carefully after expenditure. He hoped that some day or other they would get a better system than the present one of merely using Supply for attacking the Government and not for regulating the expenditure of the country.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) asked when the right hon. Gentleman was going to give a day or even a few hours to discuss the Report of the Hop Committee, which he understood was already in the hands of Members. He brought this matter up now because there were special reasons for his doing so. The right hon. Gentleman during the debate on the Address had himself admitted the extreme urgency of the question, and therefore he was sure that he was justified in pressing this fact upon his attention, namely, that the autumn session would not commence until after the hop harvest was over. That was the time, the moment the hops were picked, for the hop-grower to decide whether he would grub any part of his plantations. If the Government were going to do anything at all for the industry it was of the utmost importance that the growers should be made aware of it before they made their arrangements for August and September. He did not think that he was making an unreasonable request. A very short time would be required for making a statement on the matter, which he was sure that the right hon. Gentleman would agree with him was one of importance. He thought that the discussion should take place before the adjournment instead of at the autumn sitting.

*MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) said he supported the Resolution with the exception of that part of it which provided for the adjournment of the House without Question put at the close of Government business. He looked upon that part of the Resolution as an infringement of the rights of private Members, because it deprived them of one of their opportunities of bringing before the House and country, questions of urgent public importance or questions affecting the interests of their constituents. Under the Resolution they would have no opportunity of calling attention to any matter of urgency on the adjournment of the House, and if anything important arose they would have no chance of putting a Question to the responsible Minister from the Friday to the Monday. In the meantime grave events might arise which might have the result, in his own constituency for example, of plunging them into very serious difficulties. Take the case of a strike: it was possible that the employers might desire to defeat the efforts of the men by seeking to obtain the assistance of the military. It might be urged that such a thing could not take place. But he knew that such things had taken place, and that they would take place again, and it was necessary to be prepared on all occasions when the interests of their constituents were at stake. But if the Resolution were passed as it stood, they would have no opportunity on the adjournment of the House of raising any question. In the City of Dublin at the present moment there was a big strike going on, and efforts were being made to bring in the military. He appealed to the Prime Minister to take notice of this question, because an attempt was being made to crush the trade unionists. He saw the Secretary for War in his place. The right hon. Gentleman had experience of the military in Belfast, and he would put to the right hon. Gentleman that they did not want to see the military in the streets of Dublin in the same way. [Cries of "Question."] When he was out of order Mr. Speaker would intervene. This was the only opportunity he had of raising this very serious matter which affected the well-being of the citizens of Dublin. He was sorry that the Members of that House were so anxious to allow their privileges to be taken away in matters of this kind. What necessity was there for that part of the Resolution which prevented a Question being put on the Motion for the adjournment? That opportunity was only used on occasions of emergency, or when a private Member felt that he had something to bring forward of importance to his constituents and to the country. If they allowed the Resolution to be passed as it stood the very contingency he was describing might arise in connection with their own constituencies. Therefore, he did not see why they should allow the Resolution to pass with these words in it. If the Prime Minister would consent to the deletion of these words he was sure that he would get support in nearly every quarter of the House. There was nothing to be gained by their retention, and in keeping them he held that they were doing that which was wrong. Private Members had very little opportunity of expressing their feelings, and day by day they found that their rights were being taken away from them. They ought, therefore, to be all the more jealous to guard them when occasion offered. In this Resolution they saw another instance of how they were being deprived of them. He knew the number of Bills which the House had to get through that day, and he did not want to put them to the trouble of a division, but he hoped the Prime Minister would take such steps in regard to the strike in Dublin that the Chief Secretary and the Minister for War would not allow the military to interfere in a trade dispute in that city, where the company which carried the mails were discharging the men simply because they belonged to trade unions. That was a matter about which he would have something to say when the Postmaster-General was in his place and opportunity offered. In the interests of his constituents and of private Members he thought that that was an occasion when notice should be taken of the question which he now submitted, and that the words to which he objected as an infringement of the rights of private Members should be deleted.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said the Opposition had always been reasonable. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would agree with him in that. The Government had not put down too much business for completion, with the one exception, of course, of the Licensing Bill. He did not know why that Bill should be taken now, in view of the autumn session. He was supported in his opinion by what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in August, 1904, when the House was going to adjourn, and there was no autumn session. The Chancellor objected to the Licensing Bill of that day being taken and used these words :

> "The right hon. Gentleman said this Bill must go through. Who were they who said it must ? It was not the 'must' that arose out of any real need of the country ; it was simply a political 'must.'"

The right hon. Gentleman was a true prophet then, and now that he was in power and was high priest he ought to remember his prophecy of days gone by, and should persuade the Prime Minister to hold over the Licensing Bill until the autumn session. He was glad that the Prime Minister had given the assurance not to press contentious measures after eleven o'clock, because he remembered an instance in which the right hon. Gentleman had said that legislation at a late hour of the night or an early hour in the morning was neither good for the laws that were made nor for the people who made them. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman for having been kinder to the House than he had anticipated.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said he wished to put before the House one consideration which had not been mentioned, but which appeared to have some importance. From that moment until the end of September Government business had precedence over all other business whatever. There remained of course certain rights to private Members notwithstanding the suspension of the orders, and the object of this Motion was to take away a good many, and some of the most important of these rights—for instance, the power of raising questions on the Motion for the adjournment and of bringing in Bills under Standing Order 11 and others. He agreed with all that had been said on that side that there might be good ground for a Motion of this kind, but as he understood the matter, such a Motion could only be justified upon the ground that it was necessary to take away private Member's rights in order to wind up the business of the session. But they had been told that this was not a Motion to enable the Government to wind up the business of the session. The House was merely adjourning on 1st August and meeting again in the autumn, and it appeared to him to be impossible for private Members to decide whether it was reasonable of the Government to ask them to give up their rights for the remaining three weeks unless the Government told them whether or not they intended also to take away all their rights during the autumn session as well. If they proposed to do that it was a very strong thing to ask them to submit from that moment right through until Christmas to the deprivation of their rights. If the right hon. Gentleman could assure them that he had not at any rate closed his mind to the possibility of some right being left to private Members throughout the autumn session it would increase the friendly reception the Motion had met with.

Viscount HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) asked whether the list of Bills which the Government had starred was a final list or whether it was proposed to star any more measures later on. If not, he would like to ask the Government whether a system could not be devised whereby the waste of time caused by private controversial Bills going through the Standing Committees could be obviated, because it was rather absurd, when it was perfectly well known that a private Bill had no chance unless the Government took it up, that the time of Members should be wasted in attending Standing Committees, especially when at this period of the session they had to sit so late and had very important business to do. If something could be devised to obviate that waste of time it would be a great advantage to the House.

Mr. SEAVERNS (Lambeth, Brixton) said that while he had no fault whatever to find with the general conduct of the business of the House by the Government of which he was a loyal supporter, he would like to utter one word of criticism regarding the method in which the Port of London Bill had been handled. It was brought into the House under the ten minutes rule, having, no doubt, received very careful consideration by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It dealt with enormously important interests connected with the Port of London, and involved the purchase by public money of the docks of this great port. It constituted a new authority, the position of which required very careful consideration, and, what to his mind was far more important than all this, it proposed to impose dues upon all goods imported into or exported from the port. In other words it established what amounted to an import duty plus an export duty on the trade of the Port of London. That Bill received exactly four hours discussion, and was then closured by the Government and referred to a Joint Committee. As one who was very deeply interested in the trade of the Port of London, and had had many years connection with it, it seemed to him that that discussion was so inadequate as almost to amount to no discussion at all. The Bill, he believed, would have the most careful and complete consideration by the Joint Committee, but he suggested that what would happen would be that when it came back on the Report stage those who desired to discuss it or to criticise the decisions of the Committee would be met with the argument that they were not as competent to deal with the matter as the special Committee which had heard all the evidence upon it, and eventually the result would be that the Bill which was of enormous importance to the Port of London and the adjacent territory would have been passed with practically no discussion at all.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had considered the very great amount of detail involved in the discussion of the Housing Bill and whether the Government seriously meant to proceed with it in the autumn session; if not, whether it was necessary to put the Committee to the great labour of going through with a Bill which involved tremendous discussion. Further he asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could not consider the possibility of making some arrangement by which the law officers should be available to give legal decisions on the Grand Committees. There had been several cases of Bills of a controversial character on which legal opinion had been wanting. It was obvious that a man could not be in two places at once, and a law officer could not always be available to any Committee. On the Access to Mountains Bill the other day they were left in a dilemma owing to the absence of any official definition of what a certain term would mean, and eventually the Committee, not altogether unwillingly, had to adjourn for luncheon till a law officer could be hunted up. When he came he was a Scottish law officer and under the Bill large questions of English law were involved, and he confessed his inability to give any opinion on the English law. He did not know what the Prime Minister's solution of the difficulty would be, but there was a very great disadvantage in having conflicting opinions by Gentlemen on opposite sides when there was no one to give a legal opinion on behalf of the Government.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could hold out any hope of the carrying of a small Bill which for two years he had been trying to get through the House, and which met with no real opposition—the Public Health Amendment Act, 1875 (Water Rights) Bill. The measure was in very great demand in country districts and the only opposition to it came from the Canal Association, who were afraid that their water supply might suffer. The promoters of the Bill had accepted the Amendments proposed by the Canal Companies. The Bill would have been through already, but for the fact that it had been blocked by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, on retaliatory principles. The Government now had means of squaring the hon. Baronet. The villages which were waterless were at least as much in need of the good offices of the Government as the birds. The President of the Local Government Board at the beginning of the session gave notice that he was going to introduce a Bill dealing with the point. The local council with which he was connected were looking hopefully forward to it, and as this small instalment would help the villages and would bring them water twelve months sooner he hoped the Government would take it up.

SIR FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) said it was obvious that Bills which were now before or had passed through the Standing Committees, with the exception of the two which had been starred, could not pass during the present period of the session, but many of them were useful and non-controversial Bills, and he wished to put in a plea for giving them a chance to pass in the autumn so that the labours of the Committees need not be wholly thrown away. If their labours were to be thrown away he supported the view that they had better not waste their energies any further.

MR. MACLEAN (Bath) asked the Prime Minister whether the Children Bill was to be taken before the House rose on 1st August or at the beginning of the autumn sittings.

LORD R. CECIL desired to support what had been said by the hon. Baronet the Member for East Northants and by his hon. friend the Member for Barkston Ash. He hoped the Government would carefully consider the Housing Bill before they asked a Committee to sit for days and days in regard to it. The principles of the Bill, he believed, found general acceptance in the House, but the details were exceedingly complicated and the drafting had not diminished the inherent difficulties of the question. He hoped the Government would arrange with one or more of their many legal supporters to be present on Standing Committees when the law officers could not be present and give assistance in that way to the Committee.

MR. ASQUITH said, with regard to the Report of the Hop Industry Committee, that he gathered that it was a very elaborate and complicated document, and he was sure it would require a good deal of consideration before they could make any recommendation to the House. He could not hold out any hope of the Report being discussed before the adjournment. In reply to the point raised by the hon. Member for Norwood, this Motion did not relate to the autumn session at all. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman had better wait until the storm burst. With regard to the starring of private Bills, the Government had had such a painful experience in the past of the results of, he would not say improvidently starring such Bills, but of starring them without a very careful consideration both as to their subject-matter and as to the extent of the hostility they were likely to incur, that he thought both sides of the House would agree that the Government ought not to star a private Bill unless they were satisfied that there was practically a universal desire that it should be passed. Reference had been made to the possible waste of time by the discussion being continued in Grand Committee of private Member's Bills which there was no prospect, or, at any rate, no probability, of getting beyond that stage. He agreed that it would be most undesirable, indeed it would be farcical, for a Standing Committee to be wasting its time in the consideration of such a Bill, and, if there was such a possibility, he would take such steps as were in his power to prevent it. As regarded the Housing Bill, it was the hope and intention of the Government to get that Bill in the course of the autumn session. It was pre-eminently one of those Bills which a Standing Committee was thoroughly qualified to deal with, and he could not help hoping that sufficient progress would be made with it as to enable them to pass it into law. It was a new claim that on every Standing Committee there should be a law officer in constant attendance, but, being a lawyer himself, he was very much in sympathy with what he was glad to find was the general impression of the House, that legislation could not be conducted usefully in the absence of the lawyers. They had fortunately an ample reservoir of non-official legal talent, and he hoped they might be able to secure the valuable voluntary service of some of these Members in the future. At any rate, the suggestion of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone would be considered. The Government proposed to take the Report Stage of the Children Bill at the beginning of the autumn sittings.

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) asked the Prime Minister to give favourable consideration to the Married Women's Property Bill, which now stood for Third Reading. It had passed through Committee without amendment, there was, he believed, no opposition to it, and it was desired by the Local Government Board.

Mr. ASQUITH said that if the hon. Member could bring him satisfactory assurances that the Bill was universally desired the Government would raise no objections.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 203 ; Noes, 69. (Division List No. 183.)

AYES.

Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith, Rt. Hon Herbert Henry
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E. Grinst'd)
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferens, T. R.
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N.
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Lundon, W.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk Bg'hs)
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
Mallet, Charles E
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
Menzies, Walter
Middlebrook, William
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Rainy, A. Rolland
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.

Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hon Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester)
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clark, George Smith
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gordon, J.
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) BILL [LORDS].

Order for Second Reading read.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir H. KEARLEY, Devonport), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, explained that before the Act of 1846 there existed a legal rule or doctrine which declared that a man's right of action for injuries perished with him. About this date the law altered by the passing of the Fatal Accidents Act, known generally among lawyers as Lord Campbell's Act. This gave a right of action, but afterwards a question arose as to its construction in an action where the defendants admitted negligence, but, the person killed being insured, they contended in the course of the trial that the amount recoverable out of the policy ought to be deducted from the amount allocated by the jury. The Judge so directed the jury, and this had been the law up to this time. The Government were now seeking to amend the law by this Bill. In the case of non-fatal accidents the law was different. An attempt had been made to get the Courts to apply the same doctrine to the two cases, but when an important case was before the Courts in 1874 it was decided that the money which a policy-holder was entitled to receive ought not to be taken into account in diminution of damages for a non-fatal accident. The Court held that it would be preposterous to take into account the amount recoverable under a policy in mitigation of damages. Thus, where a fatal accident occurred, and the person killed held a policy, the amount derivable from it was taken into account when the jury assessed the damages, but in the case of a non-fatal accident the jury had no power to take this action, and the holder of the policy got the full benefit of it. But the anomaly did not end here. In 1849 or in 1864—he believed it was the earlier date—the Railway Passengers Assurance Company came to Parliament, and by means of a private Bill obtained special exemption from the operation of the Act of 1846. Parliament gave special exemption to this company, and the general effect of what they expressly provided was that in the case of a fatal accident arising in connection with any policy of insurance effected by the company the damages recoverable by the representatives of the deceased person should not be liable to any deduction on account of any money received under the policy. That seemed to be rather a curious thing for Parliament to do. He believed, however, that it was not the Railway Passengers Assurance Company that came and asked for this provision; it was Parliament itself in a fit of pious resolution which imposed the provision on this particular company when it asked for the granting of powers under a private Bill. Last year two other insurance companies—the Ocean and the General Accident—came to Parliament and succeeded in getting this special exemption. At this moment there were forty insurance companies clamouring at the doors of the House for private Bills asking to have the same special exemption as was enjoyed by three of their competitors. The Government, in these circumstances, thought that the general law should be amended so as to put all the insurance companies in a position of equality. They also thought that the representatives of the policy-holder should receive the entire benefit of the sum recoverable under the policy.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir H. Kearley.*)

Sir F. BANBURY said he could not support the Bill. He understood that the law up to the present time had been that if a man was killed in an accident his relatives could go to a jury and claim compensation from the people who had caused his death. If the jury awarded £400, that amount was paid to the relatives as representing the loss which had accrued to them. Under what was known as Lord Campbell's Act it was held that the relatives ought not to make a profit out of a man's death. It appeared that the Railway Passengers Assurance Company so long ago as 1864 or 1849 were exempted from the law in regard to participation which applied to other companies, and the two companies which the hon. Gentleman had mentioned came to Parliament last year and got a private Bill which gave them the same privilege as the Railway Passengers Assurance Company. Thereupon other companies came demanding equal rights, and, therefore, what the House was asked to-day to assent to was not a public demand, but to give particular insurance companies certain privileges in order to enable them to compete with their competitors. He did not see why the House should interfere with the ordinary law in order to grant advantages to certain companies. The proper course to take would be to cancel the powers given to the Railway Passengers Assurance, the Ocean, and the General Accident Companies. The majority of these accidents took place on the railway, but in ninety-nine cases out of 100 they were due to no fault of the railway company, and the railway companies did not wish to evade their responsibility. When railway companies accepted full responsibility for an accident, they ought to be treated justly, and the relatives of a passenger killed ought not to be allowed to make a profit out of his death. When a railway company were ready to pay to the relatives whatever loss had accrued, and if the relatives happened to have a sum of money coming to them from an insurance company, he saw no reason why that should not be taken into account in settling the amount which the railway companies paid. While the relatives should not be placed in a worse position, he failed to see why they should be allowed to make a profit out of the accident merely because certain insurance companies had succeeded in getting a private Bill smuggled through Parliament.

Mr. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) said he did not agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London in the remarks he had made about the Bill. The hon. Baronet rather put the cart before the horse, because the necessity for the Bill followed not upon two insurance companies getting a special clause last year, but upon the fact that there was a clause in the Railway Passengers Assurance Company's Act, and that a good many other insurance companies who were asking for a similar clause withdrew their applications on the promise of the Government that they would bring in a general Act dealing with this unjustifiable difference between the Railway Passengers Assurance Company and certain other insurance companies. Last year, a large insurance company asked him to look after their interests. They had a clause to this effect in the Bill they were promoting, but it was pointed out that it was not right to give them a preference while other insurance companies were left out, and they withdrew the clause. He did not know how it was that the Ocean Company and another got the clause which the Royal Insurance Company and others withdrew on the understanding that there was to be a general Act dealing with the question. He thought it perfectly clear that the railway company, in case of a fatal accident, ought not to benefit by the providence of an individual in insuring himself against the various accidents to which all were liable. The accident insurance business had grown since the passing of the Compensation Act, and it had become necessary for numerous trading interests in the country to go in for insurance. None of them would consider such a proposition as that when £1,000 was awarded for an accident on a railway a certain amount should be deducted from the damages because the person was insured. He was pleased that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade had taken up the matter with a view of doing equal justice to all parties, and on behalf of the large insurance companies he thanked the hon. Gentleman very much for the action he had taken.

MR. GORDON (Londonderry, S.) said that in awarding damages in cases where non-fatal injuries had been sustained the Courts had proceeded on an entirely different principle from that which was applied in cases of fatal accident. In a case of death it had always been held by the Courts that compensation for the actual loss sustained was what should be awarded. Take, for example, the case of a child who met with a fatal accident. The child had been earning nothing and contributing nothing to the upkeep of the family with which it was connected. This was a Bill to benefit insurance companies, and he thought the House should not pass it. There were a great many cases of accidents which occurred otherwhere than on a railway, and every lawyer knew that although the person who caused the accident was legally if not morally to blame, the injured person wanted to get as large a sum as possible.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said that they ought to be told whether or not the particular rights which certain insurance companies had got now should be taken away from them or whether these rights should be given to all insurance companies. He ventured to say that no real case has been made on behalf of the Bill, although he supposed it would be impossible to divide against it on a Friday afternoon. The hon. Gentleman had said that a man should get the benefits of his providence; but he would point out that the benefits of a man's providence were not to be reaped unless it took the form of insurance in some particular insurance company. If his providence took the form of buying a house or investing in Government securities, the man was not to have the benefit of it at all, according to the Bill. The Bill was simply a measure to give a privilege to a particular form of saving, viz., investing in insurance companies.

*THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir S. EVANS, Glamorganshire, Mid.) said that the present state of the law was perfectly anomalous whatever might have been the intention of the framers of Lord Campbell's Act. It was quite true that some insurance companies under the existing law were in a better position than others in the market for insurance policies. As to this point, it would not be expedient to repeal their private Acts, and therefore the better, and indeed the only course open to them, was to redress the inequality thus existing by putting the other insurance companies on the same footing as the favoured ones. But the main ground upon which the Government recommended this measure was the public one: they thought it was unfair to make from the compensation which ought to be given to the representatives of a person injured through the negligence of another where the man died from the injuries, a deduction which would not be made if the man was only injured and survived. That was the old rule of law under which a man's right of action for injuries died with his death. The whole basis of compensation was negligence. If a person was very seriously injured by being knocked down by a motor omnibus he could get the damages in full without deduction: but if he happened to die and was insured, his representatives could only obtain the balance of the compensation, although negligence had been proved, after deducting the insurance money which accrued through his own providence. It was not mainly from the point of view of the insurance companies that the Government asked for the Second Reading of this Bill, although he thought it was right to redress the inequalities existing owing to the Acts of Parliament obtained by three special companies; but upon the general grounds that persons guilty of negligence ought not to have the right to deduct from the compensation the sum received under the insurance policy by the representatives of a person whose death was caused by the injuries which resulted from the negligence.

Question, "That this Bill be now read a second time," put, and agreed to.

Sir H. KEARLEY moved that the Bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

Question put, and agreed to.

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [Lords].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 10, after the word 'Act,' to add the words 'or in any case where the Judge decides that a patent should be revoked.'"—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

*The CHAIRMAN ruled that if the Amendment went beyond Section 92 of the 1907 Act it was out of order.

Mr. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) drew attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

Mr. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): Oh, let us get on with the work.

House counted; and forty persons being found present—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) said that the Amendment was of a far reaching character and went beyond the scope of the Bill.

Mr. RAWLINSON said he would not press his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) hoped that the Government would give some explanation, first of all, as to why it was necessary to add so soon to the Patents and Designs Bill; and secondly, as to the certain clause in the old Bill which required amendment.

Sir W. ROBSON said that the Question of the hon. Member was a very reasonable one. The Bill was introduced merely to make good a draftsman's mistake in the Act passed last year consolidating the Patents Acts—a mistake so easy to make that it was very hard to attach any great degree of culpability to anybody. The result of that mistake was to deprive litigants of a right of appeal in cases where the patentee was alleged not to be the first inventor, where the inventions was alleged not to be new, where there was allged to be no subject-matter for a patent, and in a whole group of important cases of that character as to which the Government never intended to restrict the right of appeal. All that this Bill now did was to explain that the Consolidation Act of 1907, Section 92, was not to have that undesirable effect.

Question put, and agreed to.

Blll read the third time, and passed.

BEE PEST (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) said that the object of this Bill, the Second Reading of which he now moved, was to meet the ravages of a disease which had broken out in Ireland and had almost put an end to the industry of bee-keeping in that country to which attention had been given by a large number of small cottars and farmers. In County Down alone there were 1,500 bee-keepers. The disease was very infectious, and was spreading everywhere. County councils, district councils, and the Council of Agriculture had all united in asking for legislation to deal with it. The only way of dealing with it was to destroy the hives of diseased bees, and the Bill provided for the notification of disease, for the right of the Agricultural Department to declare that an area was infected, for the destruction of the bees, and for compensation to be given to the bee keepers. The compensation would not be provided out of public funds in the ordinary sense, but out of the rates and the funds supplied by the Department for agricultural education. The compensation was limited to one-half of the value of the bees. Inasmuch as the whole public bodies in Ireland were agreed as to the necessity of the Bill, he hoped the House would give it a Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said that the Scottish Members strongly desired to help Ireland in this matter, and hoped that the Bill would be passed.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that under Clause 5, subsection (3) the local authorities were apparently to have the power of the destruction of property, and to decide whether they were to pay or not. That was to say, they were to be judges in their own cause. That was a curious position. Then, in the next subsection there was another extraordinary provision. He did not remember any similar case where, property being taken and destroyed, compensation to half the value of the property destroyed was to be paid only if the authority had the money to do it with. If they had not the money they need not pay. That was a most extraordinary proceeding. He maintained that the clause was very incompletely drawn, and the hon. Gentleman would do well to have it altered. Further, he asked if there was any reason why the Bill should not be extended to England, Scotland, and Wales. Were there no diseased bees in these countries? If there were, why should they not have the benefit of this legislation?

CAPTAIN CRAIG asked whether the hon. Gentleman would give the House an undertaking that when the Bill went into Committee upstairs, the Government would pay some attention to the subject of compensation. The hon. Gentleman was aware that in destroying cattle on account of tuberculosis or pigs on account of swine fever, compensation was paid to the amount of half the price of the animal, but in this case, because the men were humble bee-keepers, whose livelihood depended upon the industry, the compensation was to be left open. Clause 5 ought certainly to be amended and the hon. Gentleman should consider the hard cases which must necessarily arise in the case of the poor man who tried to make his living out of bee-keeping, and whose skeps were destroyed, perhaps, through the spite of a neighbour who gave inaccurate information. As a bee-keeper himself he took very great interest in this subject. In County Down a great deal of money was made out of bee-keeping, and while he quite approved of the Bill he could not understand why the hon. Gentleman, when introducing measures of this kind, should leave such wide powers in the hands of the authorities.

Not only could they seize infected skeps, but they were to have the power of saying whether the compensation should be a few shillings or nothing at all. He submitted there was something wrong in the drafting of the Bill; that the Government had not considered what was the real meaning of Clause 5 which was really the bulk of the Bill. They were aware that the hon. Gentleman with his multifarious duties might not have had time to consider the full effect of this clause, and he suggested that after the legal advisers had considered it, some alterations might be made in it in Committee on the lines he had indicated.

Sir FREDERICK BANBURY asked whether the hon. Gentleman would give an undertaking that in Committee he would consider some Amendments to this particular clause.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said he would ask that the Bill should be committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

WHALE FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said that this Bill was largely founded on the Act passed for Scotland last session. There was no law enabling the fisheries authority in Ireland either to licence or to prohibit the erection of whaling stations. Last year there was an intention to erect such a station on the Donegal coast, and this caused great alarm among the fishing population, leading almost to violent measures. The Department sent down expert advisers who held an inquiry, and upon evidence and report, a bye-law was issued prohibiting the erection subject to approval by the Privy Council. The evidence seemed to show that the fishing population were wrong in thinking that the setting up of the station would destroy the herring fishery, but in view of the strong feeling amongst the people he asked for this licensing and prohibiting power. It would be unwise to set up a station where the fishing industry was strong, but there were plenty of places on the coast where, without objection, a station might be erected with benefit to those promoting it and advantage to labour in the vicinity. The Bill gave the Department discretion in the matter.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) remarked on the difference in tone between the hon. Gentleman and the Secretary for Scotland in promoting the Scottish Bill. He hoped when the Bill went into Committee the penalties might to some extent be revised. As the Bill stood at the present moment a man could be fined £100 for any breach of the obligations of the Act. Under the Act it would be a breach of the obligations in publishing the statutory advertisements to advertise with only four days interval instead of six as laid down in the Bill, and £100 fine for that would be simply absurd. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would not include all offences under these penalties in Clause 6, except the major offence for which a penalty of £500 could be imposed. There should be classification. A few days ago on the subject of trawling the Secretary for Foreign Affairs justified holding his hand by saying that we could not admit the right of any State to legislate in matters affecting our territorial waters and would take offence at legislation on matters outside their territorial waters. But under Clause 3 of the present Bill the power was taken to punish any person employed by a British subject who did certain things within twenty miles of the Irish coast. He did not refer to that in connection with whale fishing, but merely because it seemed to break in upon the declaration of the Foreign Secretary. He did not object to it on any technical ground connected with whale fishing but because it involved the question of foreign relations. He did not think it would constitute a grievance to any foreign Powers, but it might afford precedent for a foreign Power to take action, possibly of a serious character. He rejoiced at the tone of the hon. Member, and recognised from his remarks that he and his technical advisers were far more closely acquainted with the natural history of these mammals than the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland. There was no question about it. The Bill passed last year for Scotland was based upon the entirely erroneous theory that this one great occupant of the sea could injure the livelihood of the more humble denizens of the waters. The best authorities now thought that, so far from the whale being naturally hostile to the mackerel, the contrary was the case, and that mackerel were more inclined to follow in the tracks of whales than to avoid them. The foundation for the Scottish Bill of last year had absolutely broken down, because since its passing the whole fishing industry of Scotland, both line and net fishing, so far from being destroyed, had enjoyed a record year. While he voted against the Bill of last year he did not intend to oppose this Bill, because the speech of the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture of Ireland showed that he was fully familiar with the complicated problems involved in this question.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said he would not offer any opposition to this Bill, although it was quite true that the Scottish Act on which this was based had not given the satisfaction that was expected of it. He would not attempt to dispute either with the right hon. Gentleman or the noble Lord as to the natural history of these denizens of the sea, but he doubted whether anybody had any exact knowledge of the benefit or otherwise of the presence of the whale. All that was certain was that we could not interfere with the economy of nature without producing disastrous results. That was one reason why he welcomed this Bill. If whaling were to be allowed without regulations it might happen that the destruction of the whale would lead to the disappearance and the extinction of the herring. The whale might even be said to be of assistance to the herring fishery because in his pursuit of the herring he was liable to drive them into shallow water where they might be captured.

*MR. CARLILE thought there was one part of the Bill which required some elucidation. He wished to know, whether the Vice-President was in favour of this industry or whether he wished to restrict it or extinguish it, and why the licences had been arranged as they had been. An owner could employ three steamers on payment of £200 for a licence; for two steamers a licence costing £150 was required. But if he could only employ one steamer, instead of paying £66 13s. 4d., which was the charge for one steamer where three were employed, he had to pay £100. He asked this Question because the poor owner was apparently penalised in engaging in a growing industry which might be found to be generally advantageous to the country.

CAPTAIN CRAIG wished to know, before the Bill was read a second time, whether the Government could state if any effort had been made to establish whale stations in Ireland in recent years, and whether the Bill was necessary merely to prohibit the industry being carried on except under the stringent regulations laid down. The House, he thought, ought to be in possession of that fact, and to be told how many instances had come to the knowledge of anybody of foreigners wishing to start. He wished to know what would be the effect of the overlapping of this Bill and the Scottish Whale Fisheries Act. It might be found that in the North of Ireland the twenty-mile limit of this Bill would overlap by half a mile or so the forty-mile limit of the Scottish Act, and he wished to know whether there would be a separate Board or a joint Board to carry out the provisions of the Bill and to see that no illegality took place under it. What power would they have at their back to see that these stringent regulations were carried out? Another question which should be inquired into was the expense. He hoped a great deal of expense would not attach to the Bill, because it was not likely to do so much good as most Bills had done for

Ireland. It was certainly possible to protect the industry, and those who prosecuted the herring fishing in Ireland were certainly desirous of having the fisheries further protected. Under the Bill a certain amount of the expense would fall upon these people. Hon. and right hon. Gentleman he knew scouted the idea, but certain parts of Ireland would derive no benefit whatever from the Bill, and therefore it appeared to him that the burden of the cost would fall rather unequally upon the different parts of Ireland. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would look into this and thought it would save time if the hon. Gentleman could offer a few introductory remarks so that the Bill might be further explained. Personally he did not oppose the Bill, but he would like to see some points cleared up.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick) said that at present the Department of Agriculture had no proper means of patrolling over 2,000 miles of coast round Ireland, and he asked what explanation the Vice-President of the Department would be able to give as to the proper patrolling that was to be done if the Bill became law. It was a point of great interest.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) entirely agreed with the point made by the last speaker. This was not the first time the need for a reinforcement of the patrolling provision had been brought to the notice of the Vice-President.

MR. R. DUNCAN said that that afternoon there was Irish business in hand, and he found an Orangeman, or an ex-Orangeman, on the front bench opposite, from whom he once heard a very hot Orange speech in Glasgow. Everyone was agreed that the Bill would do something to promote industry in Ireland, and if they saw the Orangeman of one mind with the others, he thought they should be backed up. In this Bill they had some attempt at the guiding of a national industry by science and a recognition of how one nation could not stand upon its own people but must always have regard to its neighbours. Ireland must not forget Scotland or England. If Scotland had forgotten England it would not have occupied the position it now held. They must remember they were all part of the great comity of nations, and, he hoped, of the great comity of man.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the hon. and gallant Member for East Down had asked if there was any necessity for the Bill, and if there had been any applications for it. There had been an application from Donegal, and very great alarm had been created all along that coast. If there had been nothing else than that he would have asked the House to pass this Bill, but there was another station which had applied for it, Inniskea on the West Coast. He thought the whole pith of the Bill was that the Department should have discretion either to grant or to refuse licences for this industry. The point was raised by the hon. and gallant Member as to the enforcement of this law, and he agreed that that was a difficulty. He had over and over again stated that the resources of the Department of Agriculture consisted of a single cruiser to police the whole coast of Ireland, but that was a reason for getting additional money to deal with the matter, not for rejecting this Bill. The new cruiser would not be able to do all the work necessary, and he would do what he could with the Treasury. The fact that the Bill would add to the work of the small fleet they had was no reason why the Bill should not be passed. He had been asked whether he intended by the Bill to develop or restrict this industry. He proposed simply to issue licences for conducting the industry where it could be conducted without danger to the ordinary fishing. Experts were quite clear that this industry was not inimical to the ordinary fishing industry, but in dealing with the population along the coast he thought it was a reasonable thing to trust the Department and to enable them to exercise their discretion in the matter. As regards the question of overlapping, he thought that might be dealt with in Committee, and he would in the meantime consult with the expert advisers of the Department, and if any change was necessary on that ground it could be made in Committee. As to the licences, they proposed to charge high licences for a large fleet and small licences for a small fleet.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) asked if he might make a suggestion arising out of practical experience of the Scottish Bill? He thought they should consider whether it would not be as well to make the offence of landing a whale within the prohibited period an offence under the Bill, and that might do away to a considerable extent with the difficulty of enforcement.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Order read, for Consideration, as amended (by the Standing Committee).

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said he proposed to move that the Bill be recommitted. Yesterday they had presented to them a new edition of the Treasury clauses of the Bill, and he thought that that was ample reason why the Bill, with the principle of which he was in entire accord, should be recommitted. In their first sitting in Committee there was no representative of the Treasury present, although the financial clauses of the Bill were by far the most important. They were asked by the Chairman to defer their consideration of the financial clauses, and in spite of protests they dealt with the other clauses. At their subsequent meeting, they had a Treasury representative present, and they then had entirely new financial clauses presented to them, which were dealt with with very little explanation. The Bill went through in that shape, and now they found on the Paper the entirely new clauses submitted by the Treasury. That was quite without precedent, for this was the third edition of the clauses. While in the original Bill the clauses provided for the reception in aid of this most pressing work in Ireland of something like £50,000 per annum, the Treasury now proposed a sum of something like £4,500 per annum, notwithstanding the fact that the local authorities who were dealing with the problem even to a limited extent were annually losing £16,000. He confessed, as one who wished to see rehousing proceeded with rapidly in Ireland, that with the miserably inadequate financial proposals of the Treasury the Bill if passed would only have the effect of preventing a really proper and adequate measure being placed on the Statute-book for a great many years to come. He treated this matter as entirely outside politics. He earnestly desired to see an adequate Bill passed by the House, but it was absolutely impossible for this Bill to be anything but a dead letter if it became law.

CAPTAIN CRAIG seconded. It seemed to him, as an ordinary private Member, that the Bill was full of complicated clauses. Only yesterday a new sheet of Amendments by the Attorney-General and the Treasury was put into their hands, and no one had had time to understand their meaning. The new clause to be moved appeared to treat with the funds of other people in a light and airy manner. It seemed to go into the funds of the Lord Chancellor in the Supreme Court of Ireland, of the Accountant-General, and of the Local Government Board. Surely that was a matter for the Committee and not for the whole House to discuss. He thought something should be done for the better housing of the working classes in Ireland, but that was all the more reason why they should take care, in promoting legislation with that object, that they had these details thoroughly thrashed out in Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be recommitted to the former Committee."—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*)

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said he took it for granted that the Government would not listen to the proposal, and he was sure the House would not consider it for a single moment. The intentions of the mover and seconder of the Amendment seemed to be different. If he properly understood the hon. Gentleman who moved it, he was hostile to the Bill. The seconder of the Amendment, however, only seconded it because apparently he was of opinion that, if carried, the motion would not jeopardise the Bill. Every hon. Member knew very well, however, that if the Amendment was carried it would jeopardise the Bill; it would mean the destruction of the Bill. There was only one point he would like to press upon the notice of hon. Members. The argument in favour of the Amendment was that there appeared on the Paper entirely new proposals by the Government of a complicated nature, but that was an entire misrepresentation of the fact. The Bill when it was introduced contained financial proposals under three heads. Two of these sets of financial proposals were objected to by the Treasury, and they were given up by the promoters of the Bill. They were given up reluctantly, but in order to get the Bill through. The third financial proposal which was in the Bill was fully discussed during the whole of one Friday, and it ended in the Second Reading being passed without a single dissentient voice. That remaining financial proposal was the proposal now in the Bill. It was discussed in the Committee, it was agreed to by the Treasury, and a clause was put into the Bill in Committee to carry that agreement out. Since then the Treasury had found that there were technical difficulties in the wording of the clause, and they proposed to give them new words. There was nothing in the new clause that was really new; it was simply to give effect to the proposal discussed in the Committee and on the Second Reading, and therefore there was no earthly reason for recommitting the Bill. The Bill would effect a valuable consolidation of the law in Ireland and a valuable cheapening of procedure, and would establish for the first time a housing fund for aiding local authorities in carrying out housing schemes.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange) said they regarded the Bill as most valuable and were most anxious that it should be passed into law. They were not at all agreed with the view of the hon. Gentleman that the passing of this Bill would in any way bar subsequent legislation. The housing of the working classes in Ireland was a matter which certainly deserved more consideration than almost any other subject. If the Bill was recommitted, it would certainly imperil its passage. There were so many other Bills and such a lot of work upstairs that to recommit it would certainly imperil its passage. The objects of the new clause and the new Amendments were not controversial at all. Most of them were merely drafting Amendments, and a good many of them were matters which all parties would agree were for the improvement of the Bill. They were all agreed on the objects they had at heart, and the only difference they might have was as to slight details of the machinery for carrying out those objects, which were to devote the funds which the Treasury had placed at their disposal for the necessary purpose of improving the housing of the working classes in Ireland.

MR. BARRIE intimated that he would withdraw his Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill, as amended, considered.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) in moving a new clause (Application of dormant portion of Irish Suitors' Fund to purposes of Housing Acts) said that the hon. Member for Waterford had dealt accurately and very fully with the reasons which had compelled him to place these fresh words on the Paper. In the discussion upstairs upon the financial proposals, it was found, after discussion, that the guarantee of the Consolidated Fund which stood behind the sum of £100,000 had not extended to the sum of £80,000 cash which was to be part and parcel of the sums transferred from the Dormant Suitors' Fund for the purposes of this Bill, and accordingly the Lord Chancellor told them that he was unable to part with that money until the guarantee on which he gave his consent had been put in proper form. When that matter became plain, it was necessary not only to clear up that particular point, but also to consolidate Clauses 4 and 5 into the present clause in order to get rid of any ambiguity of language and to simplify the provisions of the Bill. He, therefore, moved the words standing in his name. It might, perhaps, be convenient to point out that by these new words, the Local Government Board was substituted for the Commissioners of Public Works as the authority which would dispose of the funds. Under the Bill as introduced by the hon. Gentleman opposite, the fund could be more conveniently dealt with by the Commissioners of Public Works, but, as the matter now stood, the more convenient authority would be the Local Government Board in Ireland, who would be the sole executive authority to deal with the whole of the Bill. He therefore proposed to make the change in the manner indicated in the clause.

New clause—

"(1) The Bank of Ireland shall, out of the fund of suitors in the Supreme Court, upon the order of the Lord Chancellor, pay to the Local Government Board, for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, the sum of eighty thousand pounds. (2) The Accountant-General of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Ireland shall, on the order of the Lord Chancellor, out of the new Two and a half Per Centum Consolidated Stock forming portion of the fund of suitors in the Supreme Court and standing to the credit of the general ledger account kept by him for dormant balances, and the unclaimed order and residue account, Land Judge's Court, transfer to the Local Government Board, for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, stock to the nominal value of one hundred thousand pounds. (3) The Local Government Board shall, on such transfer as aforesaid being made, forthwith sell such stock so transferred and invest the proceeds thereof, together with the said sum of eighty thousand pounds, in any securities in which trustees are authorised by the Irish Land Act, 1903, to invest trust moneys, and the annual income of such investments shall be applied in the manner directed by this Act. (4) If it happens that the moneys or securities standing to the credit of the account of the suitors in the Supreme Court are at any time reduced to a sum not sufficient to meet the demands upon them or either of them, then the Treasury, so as to afford a complete indemnity to the suitors for any loss which they might sustain by reason of the passing of this Act, shall advance out of the Consolidated Fund or the growing produce thereof such sum as they may think necessary, not exceeding in the whole the sum of eighty thousand pounds and the amount which would be realised at the date of such demands as aforesaid by the sale of the securities transferred in pursuance of this section, together with the dividends that would have accrued thereon if such securities had not been so transferred"—(*Mr. Charles Hobhouse.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time."

MR. BARRIE moved to leave out the words "and the unclaimed order and residue account, Land Judge's Court." He was sure the hon. Member for Waterford had no desire to mislead the House, but he had fallen into an error when he assured the House that this new clause in no way differed from the clause as proposed in the first instance. He thought the House would readily grasp two essential differences. Both of them went to prove the undue haste with which the Bill had been passed through Committee. The first alteration, as pointed out by the representative of the Treasury, was that the Local Government Board would have charge where the Commissioners of Public Works were to have had it. He thought that was an improvement. In the history of the Bill they had had various financial proposals. Several of them had already been vetoed by the Treasury; but they found that now, on the last opportunity they had of reviewing the proceedings, an entirely new proposal had been inserted. He ventured to think it was unheard of that the House should be asked to consider a revision of this kind without there being at least an opportunity of consulting the Judges whom it affected. It was for that reason, and as a protest against the course taken by the Treasury, that he moved his Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) seconded. He could not conceive what right the Attorney-General had to put the words in at all. They had, he understood, handed over a particular sum under a guarantee; and if the Treasury desired to guarantee any more money, he thought they ought to do so in a straightforward manner. He failed to see why the words were put in, and he thought his hon. friend's arguments were good.

Amendment proposed—

"In lines 9 and 10 to leave out the words 'and the unclaimed order and residue account, Land Judge's Court.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. CLANCY said the hon. Member who had moved the Amendment was under an entire misapprehension if he thought there was anything new in the words which he proposed should be left out. The original proposal was to take a certain sum of money from the dormant portion of the Suitors' Fund in Ireland. That covered various sums in various Courts: the Court of Mr. Justice Barton, the Court of the Master of the Rolls, and the Land Judge's Court; and the object of the words to which the hon. Member had taken exception was to make it clear what funds were being touched. With regard to the statement of the hon. Member that the Judges ought to have been consulted, he thought he would not be breaking any confidence if he said they had been consulted.

Mr. BARRIE: This is the first we have heard of it.

Mr. CLANCY said the Judges considered so much of the fund under their control as they thought would never be called upon should be released, and had stipulated that in the improbable event of any of those monies being called upon the Treasury should, as in many other cases, guarantee their repayment. A similar clause occurred in the Act which enabled the Courts of Justice in the Strand to be built, and a similar guarantee was given in 1894, when £15,000 was taken to build a new Law Library in Dublin. The only reason for the new clause was that the guarantee which was in the original Bill, and which everybody agreed should be in the Bill, had been accidentally omitted. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would not persist in his Amendment. He had expressed himself in favour of the Bill.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said that perhaps he might in half a dozen words explain away the difficulty of the hon. Member. The words he proposed to leave out did not import anything new, either in form or substance, into the Bill, as approved by the Treasury. As a matter of fact, the unclaimed order and residue account of the Land Judge's Court was part of those dormant funds which were to supply both the Consols and cash for the purposes of the Acts; and it would be impossible to allot that cash which was to be the working balance unless they were to take part of the unclaimed order and residue account. If the hon. Gentleman were to succeed in getting the words struck out of the clause, he would only defeat the object of which he professed to be an ardent supporter. With regard to the liability of the suitors under the residue account, their claims were in no way prejudiced by the Bill, because they, like other people interested in the Dormant Suitors' Fund, were completely protected by the guarantee of the Consolidated Fund. He therefore hoped the House would not accept the Amendment.

Mr. GORDON said that the words which it was proposed to leave out related to part of the £100,000 mentioned in the hon. Gentleman's proposal. There were two sums, one of £80,000 which was to come out of the Suitors' Fund, and another of £100,000 which was to come from, amongst other sources, the unclaimed order and residue account. The fourth subsection provided an indemnity in respect of the £80,000, but did it provide an indemnity in respect of the other sum?

Mr. HOBHOUSE said that was precisely why the fresh words had been introduced in the clause, which had been very carefully drafted and was in entire agreement with the wishes of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland. It was to make it perfectly manifest to the House that there was the double guarantee.

Mr. BARRIE said that having obtained information previously lacking, he begged leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause added to the Bill.

Mr. CHERRY said the Government had a new clause standing in his name, and he would explain very briefly what it was. It was really in substitution of Clause 5, providing for the distribution of the fund the Treasury placed at the disposal of the Irish authorities for the purposes of the Act. There was a little difficulty about the distribution owing to the uncertainty of the amount, and they had been obliged to alter the original proposals in the Bill, because it was found that a great portion of the funds which it was thought would be available would not be available. It provided for the payment of 25 per cent. of the annuity in each case. It was quite clear that could not be carried out, and another clause was inserted rather rapidly in Committee providing for the distribution of the money residue amongst the different local bodies in proportion to the amount of money due by them in respect of advances and also in respect of money spent by them for the purposes of the Act. Any local body which chose to spend money for the purposes of the Act would get a grant out of the funds exactly in proportion to the amount it spent. He need not trouble to read through the whole of the clause, but they might take it from him that it carried out that intention.

New Clause :—

"(1) The investments directed by Section 4 of this Act shall form and in this Act are referred to as 'the Irish Housing Fund.' (2) For the purpose of allocating and paying the annual income of the Irish Housing Fund the Local Government Board shall, in every local financial year, ascertain the amount which, as at the beginning of that year, each local authority is liable to pay in the course of that year for interest and sinking fund in respect of moneys borrowed by the authority after the passing of this Act for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts (in this section referred to as 'the annual housing charge') and shall allocate and pay the said income received during that year to and amongst the local authorities in manner following, that is to say, to each local authority liable in respect of an annual housing charge as aforesaid a sum that will bear the same proportion to the annual housing charge of that authority as the total amount of the said income so received as aforesaid will bear to the total amount of the annual housing charges of all local authorities in Ireland, provided that the sum so payable to any local authority shall not exceed the amount of the annual housing charge of the authority. (3) Any income of the Irish Housing Fund received prior to the first day of April, nineteen hundred and nine, shall, for the purposes of this section, be treated as income received during the local financial year, which begins on that day. (4) Any sum payable to a local authority under this section shall be applied in or towards payment of the annual housing charge of the local authority. (5) So much of the annual income of the Irish Housing Fund as is not distributed under the foregoing provisions of this section shall be added to the principal of the said fund and invested accordingly."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time.

Mr. CLANCY said he thought it necessary to make a slight Amendment in this clause which was intended to make a distribution amongst the local authorities in proportion to the money they advanced. The clause as it stood contemplated only one system of repayment, namely, the annuity system. But there was another system of repayment which had been very often adopted in the past, and might be adopted in the future, namely, payment by instalments, the interest calculated on the money due becoming less and less according as the instalments were paid, and the interest being paid on the reduced sum. If any authority chose to pay in that way instead of by annuity, it could not get any advantage from this fund as the clause stood. As an Amendment he proposed to leave out the words "for interest and sinking fund" in order to insert a few lines further on after the word "Acts," the words "and repayable either by annuity or by instalment." The clause would then read : "As at the beginning of that year, each local authority is liable to pay in the course of that year in respect of moneys borrowed by the authorities after the passing of this Act for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts and repayable either by annuity or by instalments," and so on. The intention of that was that there should be absolute fairplay among local authorities. If authorities in Ireland chose to repay by annuity then this clause was perfect ; he believed that it would suit its purpose ; but if any local authority chose the other system of repayment by instalments, then this clause, as it stood, would deprive them of the benefit of this Housing Fund.

Mr. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In lines 6 and 7, to leave out the words 'for interest and sinking fund.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. CHERRY said he had no objection to the Amendment, though he preferred his own drafting; but if the hon. Gentleman wished to have the alteration, though the effect was the same, he did not refuse it.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, after the word 'Acts,' to insert the words 'and repayable either by annuity or by instalment.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

MR. CHERRY moved a new clause in substitution for Clause 15. The clause as it stood in the Bill practically made it compulsory on town commissioners to adopt Part II. of the Act of 1890, which dealt with the demolition of unhealthy dwellings and the substitution of healthy and suitable ones. He thought that the local town commissioners should have this power, but at the same time it should be optional whether or not they should adopt the powers given by Part II. There might be cases of small towns where a great number of these unhealthy dwellings existed, and where the people were so heavily rated, and the town had such a large burden of debt that it would not be desirable that the local authority should undertake the demolition of these dwellings. In that case they would not adopt Part II. of the Act of 1890, and they would be able to improve the housing of the working classes when they so desired.

New clause—

"Any town commissioners, within the meaning of Section 99 of the Act of 1890, may, if they think fit, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, adopt Part II. of the Act of 1890 in like manner as they may adopt Part III. of that Act, and any references in Section 99 or in Section 100 of the Act of 1890 to Part III. of that Act shall, for the purposes of this section, be construed as references to Part II. of that Act."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Brought up, and read the first and second time.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for Dublin County cannot be moved on the Report stage, as it proposes to increase the rates.

MR. CLANCY said he did not propose to submit the Amendment, but if the Government assured him that it was doubtful whether the rates could be increased or not as the clause now stood, he would ask them to make the Amendment in the House of Lords.

Clause added to the Bill.

MR. CLANCY moved a new clause dealing with the rates of interest on loans. The clause was copied from the Bill of the present session moved by the President of the Local Government Board to deal with the housing of the working classes in England. It provided that the current rate authorised for loans out of the Local Loans Fund should be the rate whatever the time might be for which the loan was required. That was the substance of the clause. He had followed the exact words of the clause in the Bill of the President of the Local Government Board, and he did not think that he need argue the matter at all.

MR. FLAVIN seconded.

New clause—

"Where a loan is made by the Public Works Commissioners to a local authority for any purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts as defined by this Act: (*a*) The loan shall be made at the minimum rate of interest for the time being allowed for loans out of the Local Loans Fund; and (*b*) as between loans for different periods the longer duration of the loan shall not be taken as a reason for fixing a higher rate of interest.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

Brought up and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. HOBHOUSE said he was disposed to accept the clause, though he had one or two drafting Amendments to propose.

MR. SPEAKER: The clause has not been read a second time yet.

SIR F. BANBURY said he was sorry to hear that the hon. Gentleman was going to accept the Amendment, because he thought that there was a great deal of difference between advancing a loan for two or three years and a loan for seventy or eighty years. It was not a sound financial argument that because a person was charged 3 per cent. for a loan for six months therefore he should be charged 3 per cent. for eighty years. That was the extraordinary proposal which the hon. Gentleman put before them. The hon. Member said that the same proposal was in the Bill brought in by the President of the Local Government Board, but that did not alter the case, because the right hon. Gentleman was not an absolute authority. He would not dream of taking his opinion on a financial question. He certainly thought it was a wrong clause, and he hoped his hon. friends from Ireland would divide against it. It was a very unfortunate precedent to introduce that the rate of interest on a loan for six months should be the same as on a loan for eighty years.

* MR. JOHN REDMOND hoped the hon. Baronet would not persist in his objection to the clause. It was one of the recommendations of the Select Committee which inquired into the subject some time ago. Hon. Gentlemen from Ireland above the gangway would agree that the most important point of all in connection with housing in Ireland was that they should, if possible, be able to get the money at a reduced rate of interest. At present the cost to the local authorities was prohibitive, and unless it was reduced the Bill would be of very little use. He regarded this as one of the most important proposals in the Bill. He gave Gentlemen above the gangway full credit for trying to promote housing in Ireland, and as this was a portion of the proposal of the President of the Local Government Board in his Bill, and as it was accepted by the Government, he sincerely trusted the hon. Baronet would waive his objection and let them be unanimous on this as they had been on every point in connection with the Bill.

MR. GORDON said he did not pretend to a sound knowledge of finance and he did not offer any opinion of his own against that of the hon. Baronet, but he agreed with the hon. Gentleman that in connection with this matter of getting money for the housing of the working classes the most essential thing was to try to get it on as reasonable terms as it could be got from the Treasury, and if the Treasury was willing to concede it at the lowest rate he did not think anyone in the House ought to object. He asked his hon. friend to withdraw his objection.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said the Amendment might raise the question whether the loans were to be made on eleemosynary terms or not. If they were, the practice ought to be extended to the whole of the United Kingdom. Before they could make up their minds whether this was really the proposal of the clause, perhaps the hon. Gentlemen who represented the Treasury could tell them how the Public Works Commissioners secured that their practice as regarded the minimum rate for loans secured the Treasury against loss. Part of that question would be whether loans for very long periods, such as eighty years, should be treated on different terms, as regarded interest, from loans for shorter periods. It might well be that for that purpose the Public Works Commissioners might have different scales of rates applying to two kinds of loans. The House was entitled to some explanation on that point.

MR. HOBHOUSE said the purpose of the new clause was to bring the practice in relation to loans into line with that which, if the Housing and Town Planning Bill passed, would be the rule in regard to great Britain. The practice of the Treasury had undoubtedly been in the past to differentiate between loans for longer and shorter periods. The proposal here was to bring them into line so as to make the rate of interest payable for the loan the same whether for a short or a long period. As a matter of fact the arrangement had been come to between the Treasury and the Local Government Board that the period for which the loan upon the identical rate of interest should run should not exceed, save in the case of the purchase of land, sixty years. That would secure the Treasury against any possible loss.

MR. BARRIE said he had listened with interest to the hon. Gentleman's explanation. The Government was making a most valuable concession, and he congratulated the hon. Member in charge of the Bill. It would be of the greatest value to them all over the country to have a minimum rate and a maximum period for repayment.

Question put, and agreed to.

Amendments agreed to—

"In line 1, to leave out the words 'Public Works Commissioners' and to insert the words 'Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In line 3, to omit the word 'Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In line 3, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 1, lines 7 and 8, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'Public Work Commissioners,' and to insert the words 'Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

MR. HOBHOUSE, in moving to omit "shall" and insert "may" in line 11, said the Bill as it stood would compel the Board of Works to lend money to local authorities without the exercise of any discretion at all if the consent of the Local Government Board had once been given to the local authority. They did not in any way want to fetter the exercise and use of this gift, but they thought there ought to be reserved to the Board of Works discretion after hearing the case and before advancing the money. In Ireland the Board of Works had to find the money which the Local Government Board had sanctioned. They had in the clause which had just been accepted made a very considerable concession to local authorities by reducing the payment of interest, and that threw still greater responsibility upon those who had to find the money, and it was to safeguard the Board of Works in this new departure that he proposed to give them a discretion.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the word 'shall,' and to insert the word 'may.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'shall' stand part of the Bill."

MR. CLANCY said he did not know whether it was any use to appeal to the hon. Gentleman to allow the clause to remain as it stood. What they intended was that the recommendation of the Local Government Board should be final. They would investigate every point before sanctioning the scheme, and the first point inquired into was the financial question—namely, what were the rates, the position of the local authority as to debt, and what was the period for which the loan ought to be made. If the Amendment was made the Treasury might step in and refuse to pay after the Local Government Board had made its recommendation, and the whole scheme might fall to the ground.

MR. FLAVIN pointed out that the Local Government Board was a Government Department, and that a local inquiry must be held with sworn evidence as to the necessity for the loan. Surely the Local Government Board inspector would not approve the loan unless the local authority was financially sound and badly wanted the money to build houses. It might happen under the Amendment that after all the expense of the inquiry and after the scheme was approved, the Board of Works would veto the report of the Local Government Board inspector and refuse to advance the money. If that occurred it would simply mean that the Act would become a failure, because the local authority would not promote a second inquiry after having had the first and then failed to get the grant. He strongly supported the view of his hon. friend. It was an extraordinary position that one Government Department should step in and override the decision of another. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would leave the words as they stood in the Bill.

Mr. JOYCE said a case in point had occurred within the past six weeks. A loan was applied for by a local authority to the Local Government Board which, after holding an inquiry, sanctioned the loan. The Board of Works presumably held another inquiry on their own and refused to advance the loan. That was what they wanted to put a stop to.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he was afraid he must adhere to the alteration which he had proposed, but as long as he was connected with the post which he now held, no unfair advantage should be taken of the change which he desired to make in the Bill. After all, there was another source open, in Ireland as in England, to the local authorities, and that was the ordinary money market. The difference in practice as he understood in England and in Ireland was that in England, as a rule, the local authority could go into the market and raise the money they wanted. In Ireland he understood the practice was different as a rule, and the local authority went to the Board of Works to raise the money. He did not think they could possibly in a Bill of this sort entirely revolutionise the practice which had obtained, whether for good or for evil, in Ireland for a long time, and while he sympathised with the difficulties which hon. Gentlemen below the gangway saw in the restriction which he proposed to make, he was afraid he could not at present withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 14, at end to insert the words 'by the Local Government Board.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question "That these words be there inserted" put, and agreed to.

Mr. BARRIE moved the omission of subsection (2) of Clause 1 which he thought entirely unnecessary and uncalled for. Loans under the terms of the Bill did not require to be paid out until the work had proceeded to a certain extent, and, indeed, until the houses proposed to be built were within a very few months of giving rent.

Sir F. BANBURY seconded.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out subsection (2) of Clause 1."—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'so,' in page 1, line 17, stand part of the Bill."

Mr. CLANCY hoped the Government would not agree to the Amendment. The effect of the subsection was simply to suspend repayment of the principal until the houses were built and became a paying concern. He could imagine the objection being made to this if the interest upon the money were in any jeopardy, but the interest would continue to be paid from the very moment the money was borrowed. It was only an infinitesimal part of the principal that would not begin to be repaid until two years had passed—the time estimated for the building and letting of the houses. It was a most reasonable thing not to ask the local authorities, provided they paid interest in the meantime, to repay any of the principal until they had got rents from the houses.

Mr. CHERRY said he did not understand on what grounds the hon. Member for North Londonderry objected. He could understand the Treasury objecting because repayment of the principal was postponed, but they had agreed to the clause, and speaking as an Irishman he was delighted to get any small advantage he could. The local authority borrowing would be able under the clause to defer payment of the principal sum for a little time, and he did not see why an Irishman should throw away that advantage.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 1, line 17, to leave out the words 'so defined as aforesaid.'"

"In page 1, line 20, at end, to insert the words 'Borrowing powers shall, for the purposes of this section, be deemed to be exercised upon the date of the execution of the mortgage or other instrument securing the loan.'"

"In page 1, line 22, to leave out the words 'as defined by this Act.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. BARRIE moved to add at the end of Clause 2, "Always provided that such borrowings do not exceed the present limitation by more than one-third." He said that under this Act all limitation was moved, and consequently he thought it was necessary to fix some such limitation as that which was suggested in his Amendment.

Sir F. BANBURY seconded. He thought this was a very essential Amendment. The day before yesterday he asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the loss had been to the Irish Land Commissioners, who had lent money for Irish purposes, and he was referred to a certain Return published last session. From that Return he found that since 1881 no less a sum than £9,500,000 had been written off as bad debts.

Mr. FLAVIN: What has been written off in this country?

Sir F. BANBURY said that that did not make it any better, and he was not aware that there had been a single penny written off in that way in this country. But two wrongs did not make a right, and it was a fact that since 1881 £9,500,000 had been written off as bad debts. He did not think that municipalities should have unlimited power to borrow even at low rates. This was a most important Amendment, and one which everybody who had any regard for economy ought to support. This was not entirely an Irish question, because most of the money came from England.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 26, at the end, to insert the words 'Always provided that such borrowings do not exceed the present limitations by more than one-third.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. CHERRY said that this Amendment was intended to limit the power of borrowing. There were cases in Ireland where the housing of the poor was in such a bad condition that it was highly desirable that this Act should be put into force at once, and there were many small Irish towns where the restriction proposed would not be advisable. He agreed that it was desirable that money should not be lent in an extravagant way to local bodies in Ireland, but he thought the Local Government Board and the Board of Works might safely be entrusted to see to the matter. The authorities were extremely careful to see that advances were not made beyond the powers sanctioned by law. In the interests of the Bill he appealed to the hon. Member to withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. BARRIE said he was sorry, but he could not withdraw his Amendment.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 34; Noes, 190. (Division List No. 184.)

AYES.

Balcarres, Lord
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Dalrymple, Viscount
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, J.
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Hill, Sir Clement
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, Mr. Mitchell (Lanark
Valentia, Viscount
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Hugh Barrie and Sir Frederick Banbury.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Astbury, John Meir
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devon'prt
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Cameron, Robert
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S Pancras, W
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E Grinst'd
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)

Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J.A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W.H. (St.Pancras,N.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferens, T. R.
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Harmsworth,Cecil B.(Worc'str)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Heaton, John Henniker
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones,SirD.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lea, HughCecil(St.Pancras, E.
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E.(Leitrim,N.
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Captain Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan, V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinb'rgh, Central)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Redmond, John E.(Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann,Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smyth,Thomas F.(Leitrim, S.)
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Ward John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Captain Donelan.

MR. BARRIE moved to leave out Clause 3, because in his opinion the proposals it contained were without precedent in Irish legislation.

CAPTAIN CRAIG seconded. He thought this clause would lead to a great deal of wastefulness, and not only this, but it would take away the power of the veto by the Local Government Board who had always had the last voice in disputes in regard to securities given for money borrowed. The clause seemed to him to give far too wide borrowing powers. Nothing was laid down as to how the money was to be borrowed or what rate of interest was to be paid, and altogether it would tend to encourage a very bad state of finance. He did not think the Government were justified in suggesting that the safeguard proposed by his hon. friend should be rejected, and he would be glad to hear from the Attorney-General why it was proposed to restrict the powers of the Local Government Board in this matter. They could not be too cautious in regard to money matters in Ireland, and he hoped the House would consent to leave out this clause.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 1, to leave out Clause 3."—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'without' in page 2, line 3, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CLANCY said the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for North Londonderry was absolutely ridiculous from the point of view of an Irishman who professed to be in favour of the Bill. The whole object of the clause was to enable a local authority which had borrowed at a high rate of interest to borrow at a lower rate in order to wipe off debt, and he could not see what objection there could be to that at all. The hon. Member said that the clause was unprecedented, but he was wrong, because there were several precedents for it. The last precedent was set by the late Unionist Government, who put into an Act of Parliament a section from which the clause now under discussion had been copied and not a single word altered. The clause simply gave county councils power to re-borrow on the terms laid down in the clause, and it did not increase their capital liabilities at all. It would enable those local bodies who had borrowed at 4½ per cent. to take advantage of borrowing at the lower rate of interest under the Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said he understood that the clause meant that where the local authority had borrowed money at 4½ per cent., they might go to the Treasury and borrow money at 3 per cent. in order to pay off the 4½ per cent. loan. The clause, however, went much beyond that. It was the most extraordinary clause he had ever read, and much more appropriate to some Oriental country or a South American Republic. As he read the clause it gave county councils the power to borrow and never pay off. [Cries of "Oh, oh!"] Nothing could be worse or more detrimental to the Irish county councils, than to allow such a clause to pass. Whatever the words at the end of the clause might mean, there was no doubt that the interpretation which he had given of the clause was the correct one, and under those circumstances he should support the proposal made by his hon. friend.

MR. CHERRY thought the objections which had been raised to the clause would be removed if hon. Members would consider the Amendment lower down on the Paper which the Government advised the House to accept. He thought that would meet the point raised by the hon. Member for North Londonderry.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 2, line 3, to leave out the words 'without any,' and to insert the words 'with the.'"—(*Mr. Barrie.*)

"In page 2, line 14, at end, to insert the words 'Provided that it shall not be obligatory upon the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland to lend money to any local authority for any of the purposes authorised by this section.'"

"In page 2, to leave out Clause 4."

"In page 3, to leave out Clause 5."—(*Mr, Hobhouse.*)

SIR F. BANBURY moved to leave out Clause 6.

CAPTAIN CRAIG seconded. He asked whether there would be any possibility of any large schemes being carried out without the consent of the Local Government Board. The clause conferred a very wide power which ought not to be conferred under a Bill of this kind. He thought there should be some security or safeguard provided.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 35, to leave out Clause 6."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'For,' in page 4, line 13, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CLANCY expressed the hope that the House would not assent to the Amendment. The clause had already been carefully considered by the Government, and they were more responsible for the words than any private Member. The words were put in more for the purpose of having regard to existing legislation than for the purpose of depriving the local authority of any power whatever.

Mr. CHERRY said the hon. and gallant Member objected to a scheme being passed without the sanction of Parliament or of the Local Government Board. He pointed out that the only scheme that would be put in force would be with the sanction of the Local Government Board. Nothing could be done here by any local body. The obtaining of the sanction of Parliament would be an expensive and dilatory process. There was no danger of any predatory scheme being adopted.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.) thought that if the sanction of the Local Government Board had to be obtained, that should satisfy hon. Members.

Sir HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth) suggested that some inquiry should be made into this matter. He had sat on Committees this session and last session which had considered many Bills dealing with the same kind of subject as that with which this clause dealt, and it was necessary to proceed by Provisional Order.

Mr. CLANCY said the way the matter stood was this: The late Government in one of their Housing Acts made it possible to obtain certain of these Orders without the sanction of Parliament and merely with the sanction of the Local Government Board. One small case was left unprovided for by the late Government in 1903 or 1901, and it was to provide for that case that this clause was now proposed.

Mr. GORDON said he had always understood that these Orders had to be confirmed by Parliament. What was now proposed would certainly introduce a new principle with respect to the right which Parliament exercised to object to the confirmation of these Orders. He did not say whether the new principle was a good or a bad one, but he would ask the Attorney-General to consider the point before they passed the Bill.

Mr. CHERRY said that the hon. and learned Member had forgotten that some of the Labourers Acts did not require that Parliament should confirm Orders. This was an exactly parallel case. This was practically a Labourers Act for towns, and why on earth should not the procedure be the same in both cases? The only object in not having the Orders confirmed by Parliament was to save expense and delay.

Captain CRAIG asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. CHERRY moved to amend subsection (3) with the object of providing that certain statutory advertisements might be published in any month, instead of at the periods fixed by existing enactments.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 13, to leave out subsection (3), and to insert the words '(3) For the purposes of this section, Section 203 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, and Section 7 of the Act of 1890 shall have effect with the following modifications, that is to say, the advertisements mentioned in those sections respectively may be published in any month, and the notices mentioned in those sections respectively shall be served in the month next following the month in which the advertisements are published.' "—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Captain CRAIG moved to leave out subsection (4). It seemed to him that under this subsection if a scheme was brought forward and sanctioned by the Local Government Board, no matter how autocratic or unjust, no one would have the right to issue an injunction or prohibition. If the Local Government Board were doing no harm, why should it not be in the power of an aggrieved person to apply for an injunction?

Mr. CLANCY said he would accept the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out subsection (4)."—(*Captain Craig.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 23, to leave out the word 'receive,' and insert the words 'with the consent of the Local Government Board accept.' "—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Sir F. BANBURY moved to omit Clause 9. It seemed to him to be an exceedingly bad clause because it proposed to give to local authorities power to make remissions and abatements of rates in certain cases. If the houses had been built in accordance with plans approved of by the local authority and were occupied by persons of the working classes at rents sanctioned by the local authority then the local authority might excuse the occupants from paying rates. He had always understood that taxation and representation should go together. At least, that was an adage of the old Liberal Party. Did the right hon. Gentleman intend to deprive these people of the franchise? Then, if they were not to pay rates, were the other people in the district not only to pay their own rates but the rates of these working class occupants? It seemed to him that it would be quite impossible to let a clause of that sort go through. There was another extraordinary proviso which stated that if at any time any such premises were let to or occupied by other persons, and at rents not sanctioned by the local authority, any rates remitted or abated should become a charge upon the owner's interest in the premises, and might be recovered from the owner in a Court of summary jurisdiction. The owner might let a house to a working man who might sub-let it to a person who was not a working man, and the owner was to be penalised by having to pay the rates! Surely the Government were not serious in supporting a clause of that sort. It subverted every precedent that had ever guided any Parliament for the last 900 years; and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would consent to its deletion, more especially as it did not touch the principle of the Bill. Moreover, this was a rateable clause, and he did not know that it came within the scope of the Bill. He asked Mr. Speaker's ruling as to whether this clause really was in order. The title of the Bill was "Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill"; it had nothing to do with the remission of rates.

*Mr. SPEAKER said he was afraid the hon. Baronet was too late in taking the objection; he ought to have taken it at an earlier stage.

Sir F. BANBURY said that this was one of the Bills which had been sent to a Grand Committee, and he was not on the Committee. He begged to move the omission of the clause.

Captain CRAIG seconded the Amendment. He must say that this clause could not have been seriously considered in Committee, and perhaps the promoters of that Bill would withdraw it even at that late hour. The more he studied the clause the more extraordinary it seemed to be. It said that so long as "such premises shall be and shall continue to be let to, and occupied by persons of the working classes only." Everybody knew that in labourers' cottages throughout Ireland the occupants were not always of the labouring class; and he had no doubt that in a certain time these houses, if built, would not be occupied by working classes. The clause did not in fact touch the question of the housing of the working classes; and he believed that there must be some hidden reason for excusing these people from paying rates. He had no doubt many occupants of the benches below the gangway would like to see the working classes in Ireland excused from paying rates as well as to have the rents of their houses fixed for them. Nothing could be further from the promotion of good government in any town in Ireland than the fact of people being allowed to have a vote in the locality without at the same time paying rates. If this clause remained in the Bill the effect would be that local elections throughout Ireland would turn to a large extent on the question of rents and the rates they paid on their houses. Then, if there was a loss on letting these houses he did not know upon whom that loss would eventually fall, if it were not to be charged on the rates. The clause seemed to him an anomaly, and an absurdity unless there was some reason for it of which they had not yet heard.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 26, to leave out Clause 9."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'during,' in page 5, line 28, stand part of the Bill."

MR. GORDON said he did not see why a clause like this should be allowed to stand. The man who built the houses was to be at the mercy of the local authority as to the remission of the rates, and the result would be that the owner would make up the amount of the rates by putting it on the rent. Again, if the house was let to somebody who did not belong to the working classes the rates were to be a charge on the owners' interest in the property for ten years. Who was to determine whether the house was let to a person belonging to the working classes? It seemed that that was to be determined by the local authority and that their determination was to be final. That was to say that if the local authority came to the conclusion that an occupant of a house did not belong to the working classes, they could make the owner pay the rates for ten years. He maintained that the clause was wholly unnecessary. The right way to provide houses for the working classes was that it should be done directly by the local authority, and not indirectly as the Bill proposed.

MR. CLANCY said that the object of this clause was to induce private speculators, out of their own resources, to undertake the building of houses for the working classes, and thereby to relieve the local authorities of part of the burden of raising the money for that purpose. He could not imagine anyone having a real objection to a clause of that kind. It was to be presumed that building speculators would not undertake the erection of such houses without being intelligent enough to know the conditions under which they invested their money. The clause presented to them in plain terms the conditions under which they were to have a certain advantage, and the circumstances under which they might lose that advantage if they violated the conditions. It could not be said that any hardship would be inflicted on anyone in these circumstances. An hon. Member had made a statement as to some concealed reason for the clause. He could assure the hon. Member that there was no ground for any such suspicion. Its whole object was to relieve municipalities from the burden of raising the money themselves if they could get it from private sources. The clause ought to be welcomed by the House, for it would tend to lessen the amount borrowed from the State and so relieve the Exchequer. What hardship was there in that? He confessed that he did not expect a very large advantage from the clause, but he believed that a certain number of houses would be built in every town in Ireland if the clause was passed.

*MR. NANNETTI said he was surprised that there should be any objection to the clause. The object of it was to hold out inducements to private capitalists to build houses for the working classes of Ireland. He knew that in Dublin that very intention was being carried out at the present moment. There were several cases where capitalists had taken advantage of the abatement of the rates to build houses for the working classes, and so had relieved many corporations from that expenditure when they wanted the money for other purposes. He was surprised to find hon. Members raising an objection. He was against municipalisation in this matter. He would much prefer to see houses of this kind built by private individuals than to see it made a municipal undertaking. He hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman would resist the Amendment.

MR. CHERRY thought the House would agree that this was a very strong clause. He proposed to amend it by inserting in the third line of the clause, "with the consent of the Local Government Board." The result would be that the Local Government Board would be the deciding body, and it was very unlikely that the Local Government Board would sanction the remission of rates to a private speculator for the purpose of building houses unless they saw it would be for the benefit of the ratepayers. The clause proposed to restrict the rates that could be remitted under this clause to rates other than the poor rate, and he thought with his Amendment and the further Amendment of the hon. Member for Dublin, to except the poor rate, there would be security against any abuse of the powers asked for. He supported the clause and hoped, with the modifications proposed, it would be accepted.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 157; Noes, 25. (Division List No. 185.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.)
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Astbury, John Meir
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Glendinning, R. G.
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Jackson, R. S.
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lundon, W.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N)
Menzies, Walter
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson, Charles N (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E B. (Bradford, E.
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, AH (Ashton-under-Lyne)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Vivian, Henry
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt. Hn Sir Thomas P
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarthen
Williamson, A.
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

NOES.

Bignold, Sir Arthur
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Dalrymple, Viscount
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Gordon, J.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyell, Charles Henry
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Captain Craig.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 5, line 28, before the word 'during,' to insert the words 'with the consent of the Local Government Board.'"—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

"In page 5, line 30, after the word 'rates,' to insert the words 'except the poor rate.'"—(*Mr. Clancy.*)

"In page 7, line 3, after the word 'Board,' to insert the words 'and as regards any land acquired from the Commissioners of Woods, subject to the consent of those Commissioners.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

"To omit Clause 15."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

"In page 7, line 30, at beginning, to insert the words 'In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—the expression "Local Government Board" means "the Local Government Board for Ireland;" the expression "local financial year" means "the twelve months ending the thirty-first day of March;" the expression "purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts" means "any purposes authorised by the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Acts, 1890 to 1896, or by any of those Acts, or by this Act."'"—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

"In page 8, line 1, after the word 'suitors,' leave out the word 'of,' and insert the word 'in.'"—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

WILD BIRDS BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said that this was a Bill which would meet with perfect agreement and endorsement from every Member of the House. But hon. Members, he thought, would be somewhat chagrined if the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London did not give some explanation of it. It would be an exceptional treat for hon. Members to hear a few words from the hon. Baronet on a Friday afternoon. This was a Bill which could only have justice done to it by the hon. Member for the City of London. It had a most laudable object; it sought to preserve wild birds from cruel destruction, and as everybody well knew there was no place in the whole country where wild birds so abounded as in the constituency of the hon. Member. He was certain the hon. Baronet would be able to give such an explanation of the merits of his measure as would secure for it the hearty and even enthusiastic approval of the House.

SIR F. BANBURY said that he had already, in introducing the Bill, explained its objects to the House. Such a course having been taken on the First Reading it was not usual to repeat it on the Second Reading stage, and under the circumstances therefore he felt it was unnecessary that he should trouble the House with any observations in response to the appeal of the hon. Member for East Clare.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

ISLE OF MAN (CUSTOMS DUTIES) BILL.

Read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of the cost of establishing Borstal Institutions in pursuance of any Act of the present session, to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto, and to authorise the payment to societies of any Expenses incurred by them under such Act in assisting or supervising persons discharged from a Borstal Institution."—(*Mr. Herbert Samuel.*)

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Order of the House this day.

Adjourned at Eleven minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 13th July, 1908.

NEW PEER.

John Wynford Philipps, Esquire, having been created Baron St. Davids of Roch Castle in the county of Pembroke—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—London United Tramways.

Also the Certificate that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have not been complied with:—Ards Railways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Ards Railways Bill.—Examiners' Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Thursday next.

Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered and agreed to.

South West Suburban Water Bill.—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Biill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The Orders made on the 8th instant discharged, and Bill committed for To-morrow.

London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—The consent of the Prince of Wales signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]—The consent of the Prince of Wales, signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

London United Tramways Bill.—Moved, that the order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2^{a}; agreed to; Bill read 2^{a} accordingly and committed, the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read 3^{a}, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^{a}, and referred to the Examiners.

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to, with Amendments.

London United Tramways Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Blackburn Corporation Bill and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the London United Tramways Bill; read and agreed to. All petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the Petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bill to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bill.

Manchester Corporation Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Blackburn Corporation Bill; Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill; River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.]; Public Offices Sites (Extension Bill).—Report from the Select Committee that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at a

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

quarter past Eleven o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House as the panel of Lords to act as Commissioners under the Act, viz.:—

V. Falkland;

L. Bowes (*E. Strathmore and Kinghorn*).

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly.

Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to the Glasgow and South Western Railway—Was presented by the Lord Herschell; read 1^a; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, section 7) deemed to have been read 2^a; and reported from the Committee. [No. 139.]

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1^a; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2^a (The Lord Herschell), and reported from the Committee. [No. 141.]

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill [No 142]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9.) Bill [No. 143.]—Brought from the Commons and read 1^a; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners.

PETITIONS.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Petition in favour of: Of the Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LUNACY.

Table of Contents and Appendix to the Sixty-second Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy (presented on 29th June, 1908).

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887.

Return of the number of eviction notices filed during the quarter ended 30th June, 1908.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.

No. 564. Ashanti.

ARMY.

Report of the Advisory Board, London School of Economics, on the second course at the London School of Economics October, 1907, to March, 1908, for the training of officers for the higher appointments on the Administrative Staff of the Army and for the charge of Departmental Services.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ARMY.

Further rules of procedure for courts martial; Further regulations for the Army Reserve; Further rules for military prisons and detention barracks.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF ESSEX).

Order made by the council of the County of Essex altering certain polling districts in the South-Eastern Parliamentary Division.

COUNTY OFFICERS AND COURTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1877 (RULES).

Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges regulating the mode of service of civil bill processes in ejectment, and for recovery of rent in pursuance of the County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877, and of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881. Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853–1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Emilie Fritsche, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Elizabeth Fry Refuge, Hackney, E.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Report from the Select Committee (with Proceedings of the Committee) made, and to be printed. [No. 137.] Bill reported with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next; and to be printed as amended. [No. 138.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 140.]

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [H.L.].

Returned from the Commons agreed to.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order). Amendments (Privilege) made. Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

SMALL HOLDINGS.

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW rose "To ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is now in a position to make any statement to the House as to the action taken by county councils to put in force the Small Holdings Acts, and with what results; and, whether he will call for and lay on the Table of the House, after Michaelmas next, a Return showing the position of affairs in respect to the provision of small holdings in each county to which the Acts apply; and to inquire what is the amount now standing to the credit of the Small Holdings Account, and what further amount becomes due during the current financial year, and to what purpose it has been or will be applied."

The noble Earl said: My Lords, in asking the Questions of which I have given notice, I wish at once to say that I am not anxious to press the noble Earl to give us any information as to the operation of the Act of last session if he thinks that the time is premature for so doing. The Act has only been in operation six months, and I have specially put in the Notice standing in my name on the Paper a request that what information may be given shall be given after Michaelmas next, because, as your Lordships are aware, it is not easy to obtain land except at the normal periods of the year when land changes hands—namely, at Lady-day and Michaelmas. I am afraid that considerable expectations have been raised in the minds of a great many people that they would be put in possession of small holdings at a much earlier date than is at all possible; and I cannot altogether exonerate the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture himself from having given rise to some of those expectations, for he has told us repeatedly, sometimes in picturesque language, that the applications have been enormous. I think he said that applications had been received for land which would stretch a mile wide from Berwick to Lands End. I am not sure whether these are the geographical points; but, at any rate, he said that a very large number of applications had been received. He did not tell us, however, how many of those applications were made by persons who would be suitable as tenants for small holdings; and I venture to think, from the small experience I have had in the matter, that there will be a very different number when the exact proportion of those who are suitable is found to those who have applied.

A number of the noble Earl's friends in the other House of Parliament have been going about the country saying to would-be small holders: "If your county council do not give you a small holding, let me know, and I will very soon see that the Government make them do so." Now, I have looked through the Act from begining to end. There is a great deal about the county council and about the Board of Agriculture and the Commissioners under the Board of Agriculture, but there is not a single word in it that Members of Parliament are to obtain small holdings for their constituents, and I think it is a dangerous thing that Members of Parliament should act as amateur Commissioners for the Board of Agriculture. It has been said that in Cambridgeshire 10,000 acres had been applied for and 1,000 acres obtained, and the question has been asked, "What is to be done to provide the remaining 9,000?" I venture to think that when the matter comes to be looked into it will be found that in Cambridgeshire and county councils have been of the greatest possible value to the country. If they had not tackled the work, what would have been the alternative? We should have had to have appointed at least one commissioner in each county, or fifty-two commissioners in all, at £1,200 a year each; and, even if we had done that, I very much doubt whether the work could have been as thoroughly and satisfactorily performed as it has been by the voluntary action of the county councils. On the other hand, our Commissioners and inspectors have, I hope and believe, been of great assistance to the county councils; and, if I may be permitted to say so, I think they have been a little unfairly treated in some quarters. An hon. relative of my own, Mr. Abel Smith, asked, in another place, on 11th June this year, what these men had done in return for their large salaries, and what was the daily routine of their work. Perhaps your Lordships will excuse me for a moment while I answer that Question. The two Commissioners, who, I am bound to say, are exceptionally good men, were appointed at the end of last year, and entered the office at half-past ten on 1st January this year, the day on which the Act came into force. They are well up in their work, and have the interests of both tenants and landlords at heart, and they are determined to make the Act a success. They have both informed me that they do not propose to take any holidays this year. They have arranged conferences, prepared circulars, and have advised on difficult points of law. They have had an enormous correspondence, and many interviews with county councils and individuals, to whom they have explained the Act. They have great knowledge of co-operation, which is so necessary for the success of the Act, and the Commissioners themselves or their inspectors have visited every single county in England except the Scilly Islands, and in most cases more than once. I think, therefore, the Commissioners deserve credit for the work they have done during the last six months. So much for their action.

Now, as to the result. One result of this work, and a very important one, is that it has shown how very wrong many persons were who considered themselves agricultural experts when they said two years ago that there was no demand whatever for land. Sir Edward Strachey told the House of Commons the other day that there had been 19,419 applications for 309,000 acres for small holdings. Even that did not seem to be going fast enough to please everybody, and a Metropolitan Member of Parliament asked—

"Does that mean that the land has been provided?"

On reflection that evidently struck him as unreasonable, for he qualified his question by saying—

"I never supposed for one moment that they had all been provided with land."

That is the question with which, with your Lordships' permission, I now propose to deal. The Act came into force on 1st January last, and your Lordships, knowing all about land, will realise that the earliest possible time at which notice to a six months' tenant could be given was Lady Day, 25th March. To-day is 13th July, so Michælmas Day, 29th September, is the earliest opportunity you have of getting the land, unless it is obtainable by private agreement between the landlord and tenant-farmer and the county council. That is unless you choose to adopt the methods of the Barra islanders or those unemployed gentlemen who wanted to seize Windsor Park—proceedings which, I think, would hardly commend themselves even to any Metropolitan Member.

Some of those who are opposed to small holdings on principle say that no doubt there is a great demand for land, but it is mostly made by unsuitable persons, and that in one county only eighty applicants had been approved out of 174. That, to my mind, requires some inquiry, for I think the county council in that instance must have been rather too inquisitive. The suitability seems to vary in different parts of England. In Cambridgeshire 673 applicants were approved out of 865; in the Isle of Wight every one with two exceptions has been accepted as suitable; and the general opinion in all parts of the country is that the applicants are just the sort of men we want, while their capital is far greater than advocates of

Earl Carrington.

small holdings had any reason to anticipate. I will take four counties. In Dorset 206 applicants have £14,000 in cash, besides stock and implements; in Herts 140 have £11,000; in Herefordshire 130 have £9,000; in Cheshire 180 have £26,000; while in the Holland division of Lincolnshire 490 applicants have between them money that would enable them to put £6 an acre into the land. When the unsuitable applicants have been weeded out it is estimated that in these four counties the people can put down at least £5 an acre on the 14,000 acres for which they have applied.

So far so good. Now comes the great difficulty. The heaviest part of the work is now before the county councils. In the past they have shown tact, patience, and great public spirit in making their inquiries. I hope and believe that they will in the future show courage and enterprise, and I can promise them that they can count most certainly on whole-hearted Government support. Now, what is the situation to-day? Applications for about 1,000 acres, more or less—it is very difficult to be absolutely accurate, but I think I am understating it — in Rutlandshire, Montgomeryshire, the West Riding, Worcestershire, Lancashire, and Devon, have been satisfied by private arrangement between landlords and the applicants. Your Lordships will say that that is a mere flea-bite. But it proves two things—that after six months working of the Act 200 more acres have been obtained by private arrangement than were obtained in sixteen years under the well-known Act of 1892; and that all this magic of property and wish to purchase is more or less a myth, for there have been no requests to purchase to any extent. The people merely want to hire the land and to have security of tenure.

Now I come to the schemes that have been approved. Radnorshire leads the van, having obtained 280 acres of land, and the men are on the land at the present moment. Gloucestershire has obtained 188 acres, the Isle of Wight, 142; Wiltshire is negotiating for 250, and in the Holland division, where 1,200 acres have been offered, they have arranged to purchase 286 acres, and to buy farms as well. The Kesteven division of Lincolnshre are offered 600 acres; in Cheshire they have obtained 250 acres of Crown land; Cambridgeshire hopes to have 1,000 acres at least ready by Michaelmas; and Somerset has purchased 26 acres for £2,400. This seems a large sum, but the land is all let, and readily let, at £4 an acre. In Buckinghamshire the council have an offer of 500 acres of land in two parishes at a price of £13 per acre to buy, or 13s. per acre to rent. The land is ready for the county council at Michaelmas, not only that, but all the men are ready to go on the land if the county council choose to accept it. The whole of these schemes comprise 2,000 acres of land; and, in addition, there are schemes provisionally approved relating to 261 acres and 147 acres respectively in Cambridgeshire, and 156 acres and 82 acres respectively in Norfolk, making a supplementary total of 646 acres. In many other counties negotiations are proceeding, but are not sufficiently advanced at the present moment to be brought into view.

The noble Earl has asked me to present a Return showing the position of affairs in respect to the provision of small holdings at Michaelmas in each county to which the Acts apply. I have, I think, somewhat anticipated his request, for I have prepared a Return up to 30th June, and that is practically ready and will soon be published. It is an interim Report showing the state of affairs up to the end of the first six months. Up to the present the Board have received seventeen schemes for the provision of small holdings, thirteen of which have been already provisionally approved. I should like to be allowed to thank those landowners, not only Members of your Lordship's House, but landowners generally throughout the country, who have provided land for small holdings or have offered it to county councils for that purpose.

The noble Earl, Lord Onslow, who has taken a warm interest in the subject, and whose services we all so gladly recognise, offered on 23rd June, in a letter to the Press, to let his present small holdings to the county councils at reduced rents. I should like to be allowed to say that we do not want any charity rents at all. We do not want landlords to let their lands for small holdings at reduced rents. If people cannot make small holdings pay without charity rents, they are not worth putting on the land. What we wish is that land should be obtainable for small holdings, not at the outrageous prices which have been formerly charged—I have known the price to go up to £20 an acre in Scarborough—but at approximately the same price as a farmer would give in the open market. Then the noble Earl went on to say that he was not prepared to let any land at present to the Surrey County Council unless they could assure him that they had the consent of the sitting tenant. He added—

> "Nor am I prepared to exercise any pressure or influence on existing tenants to give up land."

I think the noble Earl must be in an unique position, and that there are no single fields on his estate that could be taken without virtually affecting the remainder of the farms. I suppose that there is no tenant who is not farming his land satisfactorily, and I suppose, also, that in no case is there a tenant farming two, three, or, perhaps, four farms, residing on one and placing labourers or caretakers in the occupation ot the other farm houses. That, of course, is an evil influence. A Mr. Baylis, in North Berkshire, wrote a letter to the papers informing the public that he farmed 7,000 acres of land, and he boasted that not one of the labourers on that enormous tract of country was in a position to take one of the smallest of small holdings.

May I give a couple of examples? There is an estate called the Swine Estate in Yorkshire, comprising 4,500 acres, in the possession of the Crown. I went down to see that estate. When we entered the village in a motor car we scattered a good many cows that were grazing on the road side, and they galloped off in all directions with their tails in the air. I asked the boy who was with them who owned the cows, and he replied that they belonged "to the gentlemen in the village." I inquired if it was necessary to keep them on the road side, and he replied that it was, as there was nowhere else for them to go, these men not possessing a single acre of land on which they could turn out their cattle. I afterwards discovered that the blacksmith of the village kept his cow in the coal shed. There was no other place for it. I found it possible to take a piece of land from 3 to 14 acres for each of five tenants. It met the demand at once, and satisfied the hardworking people in the village without inflicting any hardship upon the tenant farmers.

The second instance is also in Yorkshire. The Crown owns an estate there of 7,000 acres of magnificent land. It is cut up into twenty-seven farms, and on one farm of 576 acres there was formerly a small holding of 22 acres which had been absorbed by the tenant. I have taken that out of the farm and added a little more to it, giving the small holder 37 acres of land. I ask your Lordships whether anybody can say that that can possibly be construed into a hardship upon that tenant farmer, who is still left 539 acres of splendid land. I most respectfully submit that a pleasant word from a landlord to his tenant would often bring about a far more satisfactory solution than would be reached by the exercise of the compulsory powers granted by the Act. There is very little evidence that landlords would refuse to let or sell land; but the lion in the way seems to be the large farmers, who are not very sympathetic to the movement. I hope it will not be necessary to resort to compulsory powers on a large scale; but if land cannot be obtained in any other way, compulsion is contemplated by the Act, and must, and no doubt will be exercised. The Board of Agriculture have been informed by several county councils that they will not hesitate in the matter. An application for a compulsory hiring order has been received from Carmarthenshire, and the Northumberland Council are considering whether they will apply for an order to take an unoccupied farm of 500 acres which the landlord declines to sell or let on any terms whatever. If it were clearly understood that the county councils all over England would not hesitate to apply for such orders where attempts to obtain land by agreement failed, I think negotiations would be successful without compulsion being resorted to. In regard to that portion of the question relating to compensation, I understand that the noble Earl means compensation for disturbance.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: Yes.

*EARL CARRINGTON: I think everybody will agree that during the progress of the Small Holdings Bill through Parliament it was distinctly understood that no tenant could apply for compensation for disturbance against a landlord who took a portion of a farm in order to turn it into small holdings, though, of course, the farmer would be entitled to a reduction of rent for severance. If that is so, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander; and if a private individual does not give compensation to his tenants for land taken from a farm for small holdings, it would be wrong and absurd to expect the State to do so. As to the county boroughs. I have not got the statistics with me; but they have been holding inquiries. I will look into that point and let the noble Earl know exactly what the position is in regard to county boroughs at the earliest possible opportunity.

As to the last of the noble Earl's questions, the amount is £100,000. No further amount is due during the present year; and not one penny of that sum has been spent up to the present time. The salaries of the Commissioners and inspectors are not paid out of that fund, but out of the Agricultural Vote. Payments in due time will be made out of this £100,000 for the four following purposes:—(1) Fees for the valuation of land and other preliminary expenses; (2) costs of obtaining orders for compulsory purchase of hiring, which I hope will be very small; (3) grants towards organising co-operative societies; and (4) losses incurred by county councils in carrying out the schemes.

I have been very generally blamed in another place and outside for not having started experimental farms as proposed in the Report of the Departmental Committee presided over by Lord Onslow, but, as I had an experimental farm ready, I thought it was hardly necessary to go to the expense of buying land for that purpose. When I undertook the management of the 62,000 acres of Crown lands, situated in fourteen counties, there were 993 acres in small holdings and allotments. That number has now increased to 4,187 acres, and, as showing the financial result of twelve months of the new management, I have paid into the bank this year, after deducting all expenses, £44,000, an increase of £13,481 as compared with the average of the three preceding years. Yet we were always told there would be a dead loss on such a transaction. I have tried to make a plain and straightforward statement, which I hope will be satisfactory to the House to which I have the honour to belong, as well as to the country that I have the privilege to serve.

THE EARL of ONSLOW: I should like to ask whether the Board of Agriculture have in contemplation the starting of any experimental small holdings under Part 16 of the Act, or is that part of the Act to remain a dead letter?

*EARL CARRINGTON: It is very easy to be generous with other people's money. But, having got this experimental farm, I think I should be very sharply questioned if I spent any more money on experimental farms at the present time.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I listened with great interest to the statement which the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture has just made, and I certainly do not rise for the purpose of criticising it. On the contrary, I think we feel generally that his Department is to be congratulated on having been successful in giving effect to the provisions of the Small Holdings Act to the extent which he has described. I merely wish to note, in passing, one, or perhaps two, of the observations that fell from him.

The noble Earl paid a well-deserved compliment to the county councils for the manner in which they have seconded his efforts. That compliment was, as I say, a well-deserved compliment, for I am sure the noble Earl is right in believing that the degree of success which has attended him could not have been achieved if it had not been for the co-operation of the county councils. I am inclined to accentuate that point, if I may, because we on this side of the House have always believed that, if anything could be done in the way of popularising small holdings, the proper machinery to resort to is the machinery of the county councils; and your Lordships will remember that we took great exception to another Small Holdings Bill on the ground that the go-by was given to the Scottish county councils and the whole administration of the Act placed in the hands of a kind of improvised bureaucracy.

I also heard with satisfaction the noble Earl's admission that the great difficulty in all these cases is, not to find applicants for small holdings, but to find suitable applicants for them. He has evidently experienced the difficulty which we anticipated when this matter was discussed last year or the year before, and when we pointed out how comparatively rare it was to find applicants for small holdings who really possessed all the attributes calculated to make them successful in their vocation. The noble Earl gave a very glowing account of the amount of capital possessed by the persons who had applied to his department, but it is not the possession of capital alone that is necessary in order to make a good small holder. I venture to say, after hearing the statement of the noble Earl, that it goes far to show that we were perfectly right when, at the time of the introduction of this measure, we maintained our opinion that there was no real reluctance either on the part of the local authorities, or of the landowners of England to give facilities for the creation of small holdings. The speech of the noble Earl, I think, demonstrated that, and I am, therefore, very glad to have heard him make it.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am a humble Member of the county council of my county, and have taken a prominent part in the holding of inquiries in Norfolk on the subject of small holdings. All I can say is that I do not think the Board of Agriculture are moving fast enough in this matter. There is an enormous demand in my county for small holdings, but of course none of the applicants, except under exceptional circumstances, can possibly come into possession of land until Michaelmas owing to existing tenancies. We have already purchased two plots of land and have got those schemes through. We have also several schemes in hand, but there is delay owing to the necessity of a Commissioner under the Board of Agriculture coming down. I would ask the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture how we are to proceed if we want to buy land by auction. That question has arisen very acutely during the last fortnight. If it is necessary to obtain leave from the Board of Agriculture before the purchase can be made, you may lose the opportunity of a very advantageous purchase. On one occasion we did purchase without sanction, and the sanction has since been obtained. The particular land was valued by the Board of Agriculture at £50 an acre, but we bought it for £47 an acre. I think it would have been of very great advantage if the Act had contained a provision for a revision of rents every seven years. In my county landlords are very willing to let land to the county council; at the same time there is this difficulty, that the tithe, at present a very heavy one, may go up still further. Therefore in letting land to the county council the landlord has to allow himself a certain margin. This creates a difficulty, whereas if there had been revision of rents every seven years the matter would have been much easier. Naturally we have had to inquire confidentially into the means of the people who are applying, and I have been very much struck by two remarkable things—the number of sons of labourers, about twenty-six years of age, who produce Post Office Savings Bank books containing deposits of from £70 to £100, and the fact that all, or nearly all, of them are teetotallers and non-smokers. Another curious thing is that in my county everybody wants his land alongside his dwelling. That, of course, is an impossibility. Then, again, there is one farm which applicants are desirous of having, but which is in a very bad state and is full of weeds. The men wish to take it at a certain price, but the Commissioner said it could only be taken provided it was perfectly certain that the men were fully alive to what they were taking, because he was very much afraid it would not be suitable for small holdings. These men know exactly what it is, and they wish to have it. The only question is whether the county council is justified in allowing the men to take it. I mention that as showing that the Board of Agriculture are very sharp upon us. There is an enormous number of applications, and we could go faster if we could get the Board of Agriculture to move equally quickly.

THE SPECIAL RESERVE.

*VISCOUNT HARDINGE: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War the Questions standing in my name on the Paper, viz.: (1) When will the Special Reserve units draw their complement of short rifles, and will those be of the latest pattern and thoroughly serviceable in every way. (2) Now that the Special Reserve units form part of the First Line, will they be clothed and equipped in exactly the same way as Regular soldiers, and, if so, when? (3) In a Special Reserve Unit there are only six colour-sergeants allowed on the permanent staff. These draw the same rates of pay as were drawn by colour-sergeants of the Militia permanent staff, whereas now the two other colour-sergeants who are only attached to the Special Reserve unit draw Army rates, that is, 6d. a day more for similar or even less work; should they not all draw Army rates? (4) There is at present no married establishment laid down for Special Reserve units, but it is laid down that when the Reserves are called out they come under exactly the same conditions of pay, etc., as the Regular Army. This presumably includes separation allowance; if so, do all private soldiers of the Special Reserve unit when called out draw separation allowance? (5) How can a Special Reserve unit hope to keep up their establishment when a recruit who joins the Regular Army from the Special Reserve draws the same bounty on completing three months drill on enlistment as he would on completing six months? Would it not be fairer to the Special Reserve to compel him to do six months drill on enlistment and one training with his own Special Reserve unit before joining the Regular Army? (6) What immediate steps are to be taken to fill up the junior ranks of the officers of the Special Reserve?

I am led to put these Questions in order that those regiments which have ceased to exist as Militia but have recently become units of the Special Reserve may have fuller information as to their immediate future than they now possess. I do not wish to introduce anything of a controversial nature, but I am sure my noble friend must realise that the abolition by His Majesty's Government of that old constitutional force the Militia and the sweeping away of its past traditions cannot and is not likely to be easily forgotten, either by the officers of that force or by the rank and file. For that reason I trust that the claim of these officers and men, considering the loyal way that they have responded to the new obligations demanded of them, that better treatment should be meted out to them than has been accorded to the Militia for many years past, more especially as regards their clothing, pay, and equipment, will receive the consideration of His Majesty's Government. At the present time there is a universal fear that money is likely to be extorted for territorial purposes at the expense, not only of the Special Reserve, but also of the Regular Army; and this must be my excuse for putting to my noble friend so many Questions relative to the Special Reserve.

The great uncertainty which at present prevails cannot but have a most disastrous effect on a new force about to come into being. Therefore I am confident that the noble Lord will be glad to have this opportunity of publicly stating what steps His Majesty's Government propose to adopt in order to create an efficient reserve to the Regular Army in time of war by means of the Special Reserve. I fully recognise, as do all commanding officers of Militia, that when the new regulations with regard to the Special Reserve were issued by the Army Council the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War most readily considered the representations that were put before him by Militia commanding officers. Notably, the proposal that the commanding officer of the Special Reserve was only to command his unit for the three weeks annual training, the line major to have supreme command for the rest of the time; and also the proposal that the Militia officers, whatever their rank, were to be junior to the officers attached to the unit from the line. Such gross injustices as those would, to my mind, have tended to mar to a considerable extent the successful formation of the Special Reserve, and I am very glad to think that they have been rectified.

I think it must be recognised that if, as was asserted by His Majesty's Government, the abolition of the Militia was justified in order to find, by means of the Special Reserve, an effective reserve to the Regular battalions in time of war, it is essential that those Reserve battalions should be absolutely complete in every way as regards arms, equipment, and clothing, but I regret to think that at the present time nothing has been done in this respect. That is, at least, my experience, and I speak as a commanding officer of a Special Reserve battalion. The only thing that has been done up to date is to reduce the permanent staff of the Special Reserve battalions. The most difficult problem that has to be faced in connection with the Special Reserve at the present time is that of finding suitable officers to fill up the lower ranks, for in this respect the regiments are at a very low ebb, and, through no fault of their own, are considerably below their proper establishment. I hope, therefore, the noble Lord will be able to enlighten the House on these specific points, and prove to the satisfaction of the Special Reserve that it will in time become a real reserve of the Regular Army; then I consider that nothing but good will accrue thereby, and I shall feel at any rate that in putting these questions I shall not have taken up the time of your Lordships' House unnecessarily.

THE UNDER - SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): My Lords, before I answer the Questions on the Paper, perhaps I may be allowed to inform the noble Viscount, in reply to his remarks, that it is the intention of the Army Council to recognise the Special Reserve as a part of the Regular Army. As your Lordships know, the Special Reserve has always been spoken of as part of the First Line of the Army, and it is our desire so to regard it, and to assimilate, as far as possible, the conditions of the Special Reserve to those of the Regular Army in respect of equipment, clothing, and in other ways. It is not possible to carry out the whole of that at once. We hope that by next year's training the whole of the Infantry of the Special Reserve will be equipped with the short rifle similar to that in use at present by the Regulars.

With regard to clothing and equipment, the intention is that the clothing and equipment shall, as far as possible, be exactly the same as that of the corresponding arm in the Regulars. We cannot fix the actual date by which the equipment and the clothing will be supplied, because we have at the present time large stocks of Militia clothing which will have to be worked off before the issue of the new supply takes place. Your Lordships will hardly, I think, expect, and I do not think the Government could sanction, the complete re-equipment of these men, which would entail the absolute waste of a great many thousand pounds' worth of stock. It is only a temporary measure, and we hope as soon as possible, compatible with that, we shall be able to equip the Special Reserve in every way like the Regulars.

There will be certain changes. I have a long list here of the articles of clothing which are issued at the present moment to the Regulars and which are to be issued to the Special Reserve. The two are identical, except that the Regular draws a pair of canvas shoes which are not issued to the Special Reservist and the Special Reservist wears a frock instead of a tunic. The scales of clothing are not the same, of course, but will be in proportion to the amount of time the Special Reservist serves. As to the third question, the reason why you have six colour-sergeants, who are spoken of as posted men, on one rate of pay, and two colour-sergeants, or attached men, on a higher rate of pay is this. The six posted colour-sergeants represent the men who were the permanent staff of the old Militia battalion, and the two attached men represent the two non-commissioned officers who used to be at the depot. These two categories of non-commissioned officers, whilst they are engaged in the Special Reserve, are doing the same kind of work though at different rates of pay, and the reason is this. The posted men receive an appointment which is in its nature permanent. They enlist under normal conditions for twelve years. If the colour-sergeant wishes to marry, either he is found quarters or he gets the lodging allowance. On the other hand, the attached men hold their appointments for two years only, though the period may be extended to three. They are liable to be called out at any time during those two or three years, and as to the question of drawing the lodging allowance as married men, they have to submit to the same rules as the permanent staff of the battalion, and, as your Lordships are aware, only 50 per cent. of the sergeants are allowed to be on the married strength. Therefore there are certain differences, all of which tend to increase the expenditure of the attached men, and for that reason they have been given a slightly higher rate of pay.

Then, with regard to the fourth question, when the Special Reserve is embodied all married men in the Special Reserve will draw the separation allowance. As to the fifth question, I take it that the noble Viscount does not consider it as likely that a very large number of men who join the Special Reserve intend to remain in the Special Reserve, but that they are simply joining it on their way to the Regular Army. For that reason he proposes that the men should be compelled to remain a certain period in the Special Reserve. It is very difficult to say what proportion of men are going to remain in the Special Reserve, and what proportion of them are using the Special Reserve as a stepping stone into the Regular Army. We are doing the best we can, but it has been found impossible to make any calculation in order to see what number of men intend to stay. The question is being watched very closely, and we mean to take the necessary measures to ensure that the Special Reserve shall be a real force containing men of the Militia class as opposed to men using it simply in order to enter the Regular Army. One hopes that the terms of the Special Reserve do not present any great terrors to the Militia class, and one is, perhaps, justified in hoping that from the large number of them who have transferred from the Militia into the Special Reserve.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Can the noble Lord give the numbers?

LORD LUCAS: Yes. Up to 1st July the figures were: Artillery—transferred from Militia to Special Reserve, 2,885; recruits, 1,585; joined the Regular Army, fifty-three. Infantry—transferred from Militia to Special Reserve, 18,274; recruits, 9,198; joined the Regular Army, 1,057; Then there is the final question as to the officers. The new scheme for the training of the officers of the Special Reserve is being set to work at once, and already at the Universities the new course has begun. It will, however, take considerable time and will not be in normal working order for some years to come. We hope that in the training of 1910, some of the first of this new class of Special Reserve officers will be undergoing training. It is just possible that we may have a few next year in the units that train late in the year. I quite admit that that leaves a very serious gap to be filled up before the scheme is in working order. We have not lost sight of that, and though I cannot give the noble Viscount the details to-night we shall very shortly be able to announce what steps we propose to take in order to maintain the supply of junior officers for the Special Reserve battalions.

LORD RAGLAN: My Lords, there are one or two points arising out of the noble Lord's answer on which I should like to ask for information. First of all there is the question of equipment. I very much regret, judging from the reply which has been given by the noble Lord, that the Special Reserve, like the Militia, is not going to receive anything like the equipment of the Regular Army. The noble Lord did not give us any information with regard to the Engineer units. When may they hope to be equipped with the new short rifle? They are a very important part, considering that they provide several units for the Expeditionary Army.

The noble Lord's answer with regard to equipment was very significant in regard to what it contained and also what it did not contain. The Special Reserve are in future to be dressed exactly the same as the Militia in that they are not to receive a tunic. I can assure your Lordships, with very considerable knowledge of the subject, that nothing so affects the men, especially when called up on embodiment, as the fact that they are not provided with the full dress tunic; and in many garrisons I have known a large number of men purchase tunics out of their exiguous pay. When these changes were first introduced we were assured that the Special Reserve were to receive exactly the same treatment as the Regular Army, but it is evident from what has fallen from the noble Lord that that is not going to be the case. Are these men to have any full dress headdress or not? The only men who received full dress headdress in the Militia were those who wore the helmet. The regiments that wore the busby did not receive the full dress headdress. The noble Lord has given us no information with regard to that.

Then there was the noble Lord's statement with regard to the shoes. Why should not the men of the Special Reserve receive a pair of shoes? Why should they be the only men who have nothing whatever to change into in wet weather? They will, I suppose, do the same sort of training, and it is exceedingly hard that one pair of boots should have to last them six months. The same remark as to the purely unnecessary differences which are being drawn between the two forces applies to the colour-sergeants. Nothing leads to greater heartburning than for men of the same rank doing the same work to receive different rates of pay. If this is the way they are going about it, the War Office are going the wrong way to encourage the permanent staff of the Special Reserve. It seems to me that a very grave mistake is being made in reducing the permanent staff of the Special Reserve, because you are greatly reducing your recruiting staff, and you will thereby to an equal, if not to a greater extent reduce the number of recruits. There is an idea—it is an entirely fallacious idea—in the War Office that there is a sort of annual crop of recruits who will come in whatever you do. That is not the case. Recruiting has to be very carefully done. A very large number of agents are required, and, if you reduce the number of agents, you *ipso facto* reduce the number of recruits forthcoming. The noble Lord gave us the number of men who had transferred from the Militia to the new Special Reserve. But he did not give us what, to my mind, is much more important—the number of men who have taken their discharge or elected to remain and complete their service with the Militia.

Lord Raglan.

The statement of Lord Lucas respecting the officers of the Special Reserve is a most serious one, for he has acknowledged that for two years there will be practically no officers to enter the new Special Reserve. Those of your Lordships who have had experience of the Militia know the extreme difficulty which the commanding officer has had in keeping up the number of officers in his battalion. Twenty-four Militia units have been disbanded, and therefore twenty-four recruiting officers for the officers' ranks of the Militia have disappeared in the commanding officers of those disbanded units. I ventured last year to point out in your Lordships' House that the question of obtaining officers for the Special Reserve was one of the utmost importance and difficulty, and I added that, in my opinion, the War Office were taking on this great work in a light-hearted manner and with no conception of its difficulty. I appeal to those of your Lordships who have had experience of the trouble in obtaining officers for Militia regiments whether that was not one of the most difficult and thankless tasks one could possibly undertake. When it was my privilege to command a Militia regiment I used to spend a large part of my time in writing to eligible young men inviting them to take up my commissions in the Militia. I have written to as many as between forty and fifty young men between one training and another, and I thought myself very fortunate if I obtained four or five; and when I was not writing asking young men to join I was writing, with tears in my eyes, asking the then officers not to leave. The War Office have taken no action to grapple with this enormous difficulty. To do anything at all commensurate with the importance of this work there ought to be a large Department in the War Office attending to nothing else. I hope the noble Lord the Under-Secretary will be able to reassure us a little more on this point.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I am bound to admit that what my noble friend Lord Hardinge said at the beginning of his speech is fully justified, and that all the requests which have been put before the War Office by Militia commanding officers during the last few months have been very courteously received. I am very grateful to the War Office for their action in that matter. I can only say that I wish the same spirit which dictated that attitude had dictated also the framework of the measure under which the Special Reserve was established. Some of us did our very best at the time that the Bill was passing through Parliament to mitigate parts of it which we considered would press unduly on the Militia. We were, no doubt, in part successful, but we were not wholly successful; and I ventured to say at that time that, unless His Majesty's Government were able to reassure opinion in the Militia, they ran a very great risk of the existing men in that force not transferring to the Special Reserve.

The noble Lord the Under-Secretary has given us a few figures to-night as to the numbers that have transferred. I think it is, perhaps, rather early to press him in the matter, because I apprehend that a large number of Militia battalions have not yet held the training at which their fate is to be decided. That rather vitiates the figures; but I think Lord Raglan is justified in putting it to the noble Lord that it is quite as important for us to know what men have refused to transfer as to know the number who have transferred. We want to know what percentage of serving Militiamen have agreed to transfer to the Special Reserve. That is, I think, very important. As regards equipment, I am not quite sure that we fully understood what the noble Lord the Under-Secretary had to say to us. I understand that the Militia, at any rate the Infantry Militia, are to receive the new rifle very shortly. Did the noble Lord say next year?

LORD LUCAS: Before the next training.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: That, no doubt, is very satisfactory. I understand that the Special Reservist is to be equipped in a precisely similar manner to the Regular soldier, with certain exceptions. It is important for us to know what those exceptions exactly are. I understand that he is not to have a pair of shoes. That is, if I may say so, rather a pettifogging economy, because when a man comes in after a heavy march or a hard day's drill it is a great relief to him to be able to take off his boots and put on canvas shoes, and I cannot believe that the expense would be very great. They used to have canvas shoes. I believe that was one of the benefits conferred on the Militia by my noble friend Lord Midleton, but that has now been abolished. It is a small point, but I should like to ask the noble Lord the Under-Secretary to note it and see whether something cannot be done. Then the Special Reservist does not receive the full dress tunic. The noble Lord did not mention the headdress. No doubt the noble Lord will on a future occasion tell us precisely how the question of the headdress is to stand.

I turn to the last, and, to my mind, most important question put to the noble Lord by Viscount Hardinge—namely, what immediate steps are to be taken to fill up the junior ranks of the officers of the Special Reserve. The noble Lord said the matter was under consideration. He will forgive my saying that that is an observation which we very often hear from the Treasury Bench, and which I am afraid we have been taught rather to regret when we hear it, because when a thing is said to be under consideration it means that a very long time is to elapse before anything is done. Let me remind the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of the opening words of his speech. He spoke of the Special Reserve as a very serious force which was henceforth to be treated as part of the Regular Army. The very erroneous idea which used to prevail years ago that Militiamen were playing at soldiers has passed away, and we are now told that this force is a very serious part of the Regular Army.

Let the noble Lord look at the Army List and see the vacancies in the ranks of the junior officers in this important branch of the Army. It is a perfect scandal, and it constitutes a danger to the country. If this is to be a real force you must contemplate having to use it. We are, thank God! at peace with all the world, but we must conceive a state of things in which we might not be at peace. What are you going to do with the Special Reserve in the event of war being suddenly declared? They cannot be used without officers, and it is for the Government to find a way to fill up those vacancies. It is all very well for them to have a scheme for the future, but what we want is the officers now. We want them next week, or the week after, and if the Government cannot find a better way, I would earnestly urge them not to delay but to do it on the old lines until something better can be devised. I admit that the old way of nominating officers to the Militia was not perfect, but it was better than nothing at all; and until the Government have time to develop their own scheme let us have the privilege of recommending names to the proper authority, so that these depleted ranks of junior officers may be filled.

Lord LUCAS: With your Lordships' leave I will answer two or three of the Supplementary Questions which have been put to me. The latest Returns show that whilst over 20,000 men have joined the Special Reserve, almost exactly 5,000 have decided to remain as Militiamen, and just under 6,000 have taken their discharge. As to the question of clothing, I do not think I made myself quite clear. It is the intention of the Army Council thoroughly to clothe and equip the Special Reserve in the same way as the corresponding arm of the Regulars. That will not take place immediately, because there are these large stocks of Militia clothing which have to be worked off. The intention is to supply similar clothing, and this will be carried out as soon as possible.

CIVIL SERVANTS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

The Earl of ARRAN rose to call attention to the Treasury Regulations as to leave granted to those Civil servants who belong to the Territorial Forces for the purpose of attending their annual training; and to move for Papers. The noble Earl said: My Lords, I hope that my object in bringing forward this Motion will not be misconstrued. I have the honour to command a corps which is composed almost exclusively of Civil servants. I think I am right in expressing the opinion that the success of Mr. Haldane's new Army scheme must depend more or less on the encouragement which is given by both private and public employers of labour to their subordinates to join the Territorial Army.

It is very easy to say that every able-bodied young man should join the Territorial Army, but when you put that into practice it means the sacrifice for the good of the State of a fortnight's work and the accompanying wages, and the question arises, On whom should the loss of wages fall? Those of your Lordships who are large employers of labour have already discovered how difficult it is to arrange matters so that this burden does not fall on the man who performs military duties. I think the community of employers were justified in thinking that, when a scheme demanding such sacrifices as this was originated by the Secretary of State, the Government would set an example; and the Secretary of State, in his speeches urging employers of labour to give facilities to their subordinates, seemed to be of the same opinion. On 4th April, Mr. Haldane said at Wolverhampton—

> "The Government relied greatly on the co-operation of employers of labour. The Government were going to set an example to those employers, and would give facilities for a fifteen days camp to men in their employ and allow them their civilian pay while in camp."

And at Bristol, in May, Mr. Haldane is reported to have—

> "pointed out the opportunities given by the Treasury to Government employees—fifteen

days leave at camp, not in the Civil servant's holiday time and on full civilian pay."

It is natural that the Civil servants gathered from those statements that they were to be given a fortnight's special leave to attend camp while drawing their civil pay; but in certain Departments of the Civil Service—notably in the Savings Bank and the Post Office—the heads of departments are able, under the present Treasury regulations, to give their subordinates leave to attend camp only under such strict conditions as the deducting of eleven days from each man's annual leave, or the provision of a substitute out of his civil pay, or the making up of seventy-one hours overtime. The majority of the young men in the Civil Service who join the Territorial Army have only fourteen days annual leave altogether, and they are dependent almost entirely on their civil pay for their expenses. The hardship of the present regulations is, therefore, sufficiently obvious, for it seems that if a Civil servant wishes to serve his country in the Territorial Army he has to give up either a part of his income or the only chance he has of getting away for an annual rest; and, as regards the making up of seventy-one hours overtime, I think it is asking almost too much of a young man's patriotism that he should be expected to stay day after day, week after week, and perhaps month after month, working overtime while those of his colleagues who are not sufficiently patriotic to join the Territorial Forces go away and amuse themselves.

There are two corps, one commanded by my noble friend Lord Granard, and the other I have the honour to command—the Post Office Corps and the Civil Service Rifles—which are composed almost exclusively of Civil servants; and my experience is that, though of exceptional military value, owing to their intellectual training, they must in time cease to exist if these regulations are persisted in. I do not think it is too much to ask of His Majesty's Government, when they are demanding so much from private employers of labour, that every man in the Civil Service who wishes to serve in the Territorial Army should have a fortnight's special leave to do so, and that it should cost him nothing out of his own pocket. If these corps should cease to exist it would be a sufficient evil of itself, but there is a greater evil. I refer to the force of example. If the Secretary of State makes appeals to private employers of labour to help their subordinates join the Territorial Army, what response can he logically hope to get unless the Government themselves set an example? I beg to move for the correspondence relating to this matter.

Moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Majesty for any correspondence that has passed between the War Office, the Treasury, and Heads of Departments respecting the Treasury Regulations as to leave granted to those Civil servants who belong to the Territorial Forces for the purpose of attending their annual training."—(*The Earl of Arran.*)

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, whilst I regret that the noble Earl has thought fit to make such a vigorous and unsparing attack on the Treasury Regulations, at the same time I recognise there is no Member of your Lordships' House better entitled to raise this question than the noble Earl, who, as he has said, is the commanding officer of the Civil Service Rifles, which I am given to understand by my noble friend the Under-Secretary of State for War is one of the smartest regiments in the London Division. Speaking generally, I may say that it is the intention of the Government to afford Civil servants every reasonable facility, subject, of course, to the requirements of the public service, for joining the Territorial Force. Again, speaking generally—and I think the noble Earl himself will admit this—the present Treasury Regulations are very much better, from the point of view of commanding officers of regiments, than they were formerly in the days of the Volunteers. The Regulations have been relaxed as much as they possibly could be, considering the interest of the public service, to meet the desires of those responsible for the organisation of the Territorial Force. The noble Earl is rather using the concessions already made as a lever to obtain a still further relaxation of the Treasury Regulations in the direction he desires.

The way in which the Treasury look at the question is this. The requirements of the Department to which the Civil servant belongs take precedence; that is to say, if he cannot be spared from his particular Department he cannot go to camp. He is a Civil servant first, and a soldier afterwards. Full discretion, of course, must be given to the heads of departments as to whether a particular man can, or cannot, be spared to go out for his training; and I put it to any Member of this House who has himself controlled one of the large Government Departments or has served in a great Department of State, whether any other arrangement than that would be possible. Subject to these requirements a Civil servant may be granted, in addition to his ordinary holidays, special leave, not exceeding fifteen days, for attendance at camp. During such time he will draw military pay from the Army funds, and on returning to civil life will be given the difference between his military pay and his ordinary civil pay—that is to say, he draws his ordinary office pay. No account is taken of the ration and other allowances that he receives while in camp. Therefore he gets that in addition.

I now come to the question of substitutes. Where a man is allowed to go to camp and his place has to be taken by a substitute, his civil pay will be stopped during his absence. If the cost of the substitute is less than the salary of the Civil servant, the latter will have the benefit of the difference; where it is more the difference is met out of the public funds. I understand the contention of the noble Earl to be this, that the Government should find both the military pay and the civil pay, and, in addition, pay for the substitute.

The Earl of ARRAN: No. He would sacrifice his military pay, but should be allowed to keep his civil pay.

Lord DENMAN: The Government then would have to find the civil pay and also defray the cost of the substitute?

The Earl of ARRAN: Certainly.

Lord DENMAN: That is to say, however much the pay may be which the particular Civil servant may draw, the Government would have to find the cost of the substitute, which, of course, may amount in particular cases to a very considerable sum. I do not think that the Treasury are prepared to make that concession. I should add that if a Civil servant elects to spend his ordinary holiday in camp he will draw his civil and military pay in full. I can say from experience how very much better these regulations are than those which existed a few years ago when I commanded a squadron of the Middlesex Yeomanry. It was frequently extremely difficult to get leave for a Civil servant at all, and I submit that the present regulations are very much more favourable to Volunteer regiments than those formerly in force. I think I can safely add that if employers of labour throughout the country will follow the example which has been set in this matter by the Treasury and make it as easy for their men to attend camp as has been done by the Government, I do not think those responsible for the inception and organisation of the Territorial Force will have any reason whatever to complain.

The Earl of ARRAN: My Lords, as I have a right of reply I will venture to trouble your Lordships with a very few words in regard to the noble Earl's answer. My noble friend suggested that I was rather using the concessions already made by His Majesty's Treasury as a lever to obtain a still further relaxation of the regulations. I venture, with all deference, to say that I do not know what great inducements have already been given. The noble Lord referred to the great difference between the old regulations regarding leave and the present. I commanded a battalion when the old regulations were in force, and they at least allowed one full extra week's leave on full pay. Therefore the men had only to sacrifice the other week. That was better than the present regulation in the case of Civil servants in the Post Office.

Lord DENMAN: But was not that rather a special case?

The Earl of ARRAN: No.

***LORD DENMAN**: I think the noble Earl refers to the Field Army Brigade, which was rather a special case.

THE EARL OF ARRAN: The noble Lord said that the man was a Civil servant first and a soldier afterwards. Well, take the case of a young man employed by Messrs. Marshal and Snelgrove. He is a Marshal and Snelgrovian first; and therefore exactly the same argument applies in the case of private employers. If the concessions for which I ask cannot be made then I venture to submit that His Majesty's Government would have done much better not to have allowed the Civil servants to join the Territorial Army. I might add that one company in my corps is going to receive applications for leave from camp this year from 50 per cent. of its members in this particular Department.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, as my noble friend has mentioned me by name, perhaps I may be allowed to say a word or two on this question. I may explain, however, that I do not assume command of the Post Office Corps until October. I have had a certain amount to do with this question in connection with the Post Office, and I have naturally taken a very great interest in it. The real point is that of substitution, which affects the Post Office very materially. In the case of the Board of Trade or the Local Government Board, or similar offices, it is quite easy to allow one of the staff to go away for fifteen days leave, and no actual substitution is required. The trouble really arises in a department like the Post Office, where there is an enormous amount of manipulative duty in connection with the telegraph and the London postal service. Therefore it is impossible to do the work without engaging a substitute. When first the Treasury brought out their rules they insisted that any cost of substitution should be borne by the individual. I am glad that the Treasury have modified that since, and that they have now provided that where the cost of substitution exceeds the civil pay of the individual in question it is paid by the Department and where the amount is less the Civil servant gets the benefit. The noble Earl also referred to his own corps—the Civil Service Rifles—and to the old regulations which existed in this matter. At that time, I understand, certain regiments (speaking from memory, I think there were twenty-eight battalions) known as "the Field Army Brigade," were allowed seven days full pay during the time of their embodiment. As far as the Post Office Corps is concerned, that has never been the case. They did not belong to this Brigade, and consequently the new Regulations seem, as far as the Post Office is concerned, more or less to meet their views. I can only say that I have inquired with regard to recruiting for the Post Office Corps, and that at the present moment they are over 800 strong, the full strength of the battalion being just under 1,000. This Return I received about a month ago, and at the present moment we are probably completely up to strength.

The noble Lord also mentioned the question of overtime, and took exception to the men working seventy-one hours. This morning the Comptroller of the Savings Bank came to see me on this question, and he informed me that he gave the men the option of going into camp during annual leave and getting civil and military pay, or, on the other hand, of substitution; and he asked them whether they would care to take advantage of overtime. The whole amount of overtime, as I think the Earl of Arran said, is seventy-one hours, which will be spread over the whole of the year.

THE EARL OF ARRAN: Until Christmas.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: Until Christmas of this year, and in future years probably over.

I can only, in conclusion, say that I think it would be very difficult for the Treasury to do any more than they have done, and that as far as the Battalion with which I deal is concerned, the returns which we are getting seem to me to be very satisfactory—a state of things which I hope will continue.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: I do not think from the speech of either of the noble Lords on the opposite bench that the Government quite appreciate the extremely delicate ground on which the whole question rests of getting the Territorial Army to train for a fortnight. I know from some past experience that if anything is likely to break down the scheme of the Secretary for War, it is this difficulty by which, even if a man gets exactly the same for going out as he does for not going out, he is really a loser, because his expenses in camp are heavier than when he is living at home. I feel myself that this is so difficult a question that I would urge the Government to reconsider it from the point of view of economy. I would be no party to urging upon the Government that they should so increase the cost of the Territorial Army that more money has to be found than that which is allotted at present to the general service of the Army, because I feel that that will only lead to a reduction of the Regular Army. But this is the point I would venture to urge. Unless you can induce employers to bear some share of the cost of their men going out I do not think you will find that the men, after they have tried it for a year or so, will be able to continue their service for the fortnight of training which you have now thought it necessary to lay down. If that be so, recollect the position in which you will then stand. If you have to keep 150,000 men, or, still more, 200,000 or 300,000 men, in camp at anything like what will pay them for going into camp, you will have to add to your present pay by something like the equivalent of the present pay, or half as much again. I do not think 1s. or 2s. will do it. I think that this move which the noble Lord has brought out to-day, is really a false economy on the part of the Government. If you ask a man to go out, and to pay a substitute in the Post Office, he is, of course, absolutely a loser at this moment by going into camp. He cannot afford to do it, and he will not do it; and that is the case with nearly everybody in private employment. I do not know what numbers of Volunteers to the Territorial Army are involved. The noble Lord the Earl of Granard mentioned one corps of 800 strong, but I imagine the total number in Government employ is not more than hundreds—I take it that it hardly runs into thousands. Perhaps the noble Earl will tell me.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: I think, if the noble Earl will excuse my interrupting him, the whole establishment of the Post Office is over 246,000, and in nearly every town or village in the country some members of the Post Office belong to the Volunteers or to the Territorial Army in some form or other. I should say, speaking offhand, the numbers would reach something like 4,000 or 5,000.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: Supposing the noble Earl is correct, I would ask your Lordships to consider what is involved. If you provide the pay of 4,000 or 5,000 men, or their substitutes, for a fortnight, you are giving encouragement to the whole of your other men to do something of the same kind, but if you withhold the whole of that pay, which comes to a very small amount, you do not encourage employers to put their employees into a position in which they could possibly afford to come out. That is the reason why the Field Army, who are 30,000 or 40,000 strong, were given some years ago seven days extra leave without pay. What I understood the noble Lord, Lord Denman, to say was that they should be made a special case, and that half their training, at all events, should be at the expense of the Department. Well, I honestly believe that if the Government will act liberally by those in their own employ, they will set an example which employers may possibly follow; but if they do not, I apprehend that it will be found, before many months are over, that it is impossible to continue this fortnight's training which I believe is essential, which has always been of the greatest difficulty, and which can only be carried out if all concerned are willing to make some sacrifice in order to prevent its falling too heavily upon those who are willing to give up their time to the service of the country.

LORD LUCAS: I think the Treasury have been treated rather unjustly. What is it that the Treasury are prepared to do? In the first place, besides the ordinary holiday, they are prepared to give a fortnight's holiday to any Civil servant in the Territorial Force, and are also prepared to pay him his full pay during the time he is out. If, further, the man has to provide a substitute for himself, the Treasury are prepared to pay his full civil pay, and also his military pay. It is paying him two wages simultaneously. Certain cases were quoted by Lord Arran, which I understand are in a minority, in which the cost of providing a substitute amounts to as much as the man's full Civil pay, but in most cases I believe that it does not do so. I think the Treasury, after all, have set some sort of worthy example in allowing the man who is so far indispensable that it is impossible to provide a substitute for him—in the first place impossible to provide a substitute for him as required, and, in the second place, impossible to provide a substitute at any lower rate than he himself is earning—the Treasury, I say, is setting an example in allowing that man to go out at all. In the second place, it is doing that which we have always said. We have never pretended, from the beginning, that we were going to compete against civil employment in the matter of pay during the time the Territorial Army was out. We have said all through that we were going to pay Army rates of pay, and that if men chose to come out for that they could. Everybody has gone into that with his eyes open, and the Territorial Force understand that they are to be paid at Army rates of pay. The Civil servant who gets this extra fortnight has, as I say, in most cases, not only that Army rate of pay, but either a sum amounting to the whole of his civil pay, or in most cases a certain proportion of his civil pay as well. I think we may fairly say that the Treasury has treated the War Office very generously in this matter, and we only hope that private employers will be able to do as much for us, and we shall be deeply grateful if they will do as the Treasury has done.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: That this Motion be agreed to?

THE EARL OF ARRAN: I beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION BILL. [H.L.].

Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order). Bill reported without Amendment.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, on that Motion I beg to observe that on every Bill that is brought forward now it is moved that the Standing Committee be negatived. During the last month there is only one Bill that I know of (which is Lord Lovat's Crofters Bill) which has been allowed to go to the Standing Committee, and I think about a month before that there was a Bill of my own which also related to Scotland. With these two exceptions it has now become a general practice to move that the Standing Committee be negatived.

Now, my Lords, what particular hurry is there about this Bill? The Standing Committee sits to-morrow. I am perfectly prepared, if any of your Lordships choose to move the abolition of the Standing Committee altogether, to support that. That is another matter, but so long as the Standing Committee exists—and this Bill apparently is a perfectly trivial Bill—why in the world it should not go to the Standing Committee, if you are going to have a Standing Committee at all, I do not see.

LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, there is no objection to this Bill going to the Standing Committee, as the noble Lord seems to desire it, and therefore I withdraw the Motion to negative the Standing Committee.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment.

LORD NEWTON moved that the Standing Committee be dispensed with. He wished to make a special appeal to Lord Camperdown. This was an essentially trivial measure, and was the result of an agreement arrived at last year between himself and the Government. Although he had the highest respect for his noble friend's activity in the character of a watchdog, yet there really was nothing objectionable in this Bill, and he saw no reason why he should not be allowed to have his way with regard to it. The reason he asked this favour at the noble Earl's hands was that he would be obliged to absent himself shortly from the House, and he desired, if his noble friend would permit him, to get the Bill through before the end of the week.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*Lord Newton*).

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN was sure the House would greatly regret the absence of his noble friend (Lord Newton). If the House were to lose him it would be a very great loss, but he must say that every remark he had made with regard to the previous Bill applied equally to this. His noble friend himself said it was a very trivial Bill.

LORD NEWTON: So it is.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said that if it were so there was no reason why it should not go to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee would meet to-morrow, and it would only protract the course of the Bill by one day if it followed the usual course. There were certain rules of the House, and in his opinion, so long as the House chose to have a Standing Committee Bills ought to go to it. He quite admitted that the question of whether there should be a Standing Committee or not was open to argument, and he believed that a great part of the usefulness of the Standing Committee had gone, but so long as it existed it was absurd to hear noble Lord after noble Lord standing up and saying, "I have got an excessively trivial Bill, and therefore it need not go to the Standing Committee."

LORD NEWTON: You do not object.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Yes, I do object.

LORD NEWTON: Then all I can say is that I shall object to any of the noble Lord's Bills.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): I am sorry to say I am not acquainted with the contents of this Bill, and I cannot say, therefore, whether this particular Bill ought to go to the Standing Committee or not. I have not an opinion. I am rather inclined to agree that it has become a rule to negative the Standing Committee without much consideration. We have all, in former days, spent many happy hours in the Standing Committee. I do not know whether, as the noble Earl said, its usefulness has entirely departed. My impression is that it was a more useful body to noble Lords on this side of the House when they were in Opposition. In those days it used to give occasion for more minute examination of Bills which they would not have received in face of the alarming battalions drawn up on the Ministerial side of the House. I do not know whether the noble Earl will think it necessary to press his Motion on this occasion. We should all be very sorry if the noble Lord was debarred from departing in search of that repose which I am sure he has richly earned, and I should almost advise the noble Earl to withdraw his opposition on this particular occasion.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said that under the circumstances he would withdraw his opposition, but at the same time he would remark that Lord Allendale had been very badly treated.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY suggested what he considered a better course. The noble Lord had business not only in that House but also on an important Committee outside the House, but within its precincts, and he would suggest that he might postpone his departure.

On Question, Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

WORKING OF THE IRISH LAND ACT.

***LORD CLONBROCK**, who had the following Question upon the Paper—

"To ask His Majesty's Government for the following information relative to the working of the Irish Land Act, 1903: (1) Why the recent issue of £5,000,000 in Guaranteed 2¾ per cent. Stock was not made to the National Debt Commissioners at the certified price of the day in accordance with the practice which has been followed since June, 1906, as mentioned in Paragraph 35 of the recent Report of the Departmental Committee of the Treasury [Cd. 4005], and the continuance of which practice is recommended in Paragraphs 84 and 85 of that Report. (2) What is (approximately) the extra annual charge which will be thrown upon the Ireland Development Grant by this £5,000,000 having been issued to the public at 89½, instead of being made to the National Debt Commissioners at the certified price of the day? (3) Have the Government definitely abandoned the practice (which originated with themselves) of making these issues to the National Debt Commissioners, and, if so, why. (4) How much of the proceeds of the recent issue of £5,000,000 Stock will be immediately absorbed by claims already existing, viz.: 1. Repayment of temporary loans made under Section 30 of the Act, or otherwise, and not yet repaid; 2. Sums immediately required to meet: (*a*) Advances already sanctioned for direct sales under Sections 1 to 5 of the Act; (*b*) advances already sanctioned for purchases under Sections 6, 7, and 8 of the Act; (*c*) advances immediately payable to the Congested Districts Board for any purpose; (*d*) any other advances that are immediately payable out of the Irish Land Purchase Fund—"

said: My Lords, in putting the Question standing in my name, I should like to say a very few words in explanation of their objects. The first paragraph refers to the issue lately of £5,000,000 Guaranteed Land Stock, and the object of that part of the Question is to know why this was issued to the public at 89½ instead of the usual practice being followed of the issue being made to the National Debt Commissioners. Ever since the month of June, 1906, this has been the practice. It is so stated in the report of the Departmental Committee of the Treasury, and they not only recommend this in paragraph 84 for the future, but state in the following paragraph that it seems reasonable to suppose that the National Debt Commissioners would be in a position to lend £5,000,000 a year. The difference is very considerable. Immediately preceding the issue of this loan Land Stock stood at 91¾ to 92, and the issue was made to the public at 89½. I have no doubt there is some good reason for it, for the Government would naturally like to obtain money on the best terms they could, but at the same time we should naturally like to know why it was done, and also whether the same practice is to be continued in the future, and what amount wou'd be thrown on the Irish Development Grant by issuing the loan in this manner instead of at the price of the day. The remaining part of my Question refers only to what amount of this loan will be available for purchase. I wish to know what claims are already made: (1) For direct sales to tenants; (2) for sales to the Estates Commissioners; and (3) for money that has to be paid to the Congested Districts Board and for any other advances that have to be made.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, the Answer to the first Question the noble Lord has on the Paper, as to why the issue of stock was not made to the National Debt Commissioners, is very brief. Because the National Debt Commissioners have no funds, unfortunately, and therefore the noble Lord will agree that they cannot advance the money, with the best wishes in the world. Going to Question 3, he asks: "Have the Government definitely abandoned the practice of making these issues to the National Debt Commissioners?" I am afraid I am unable to make any definite announcement on that point. Then in Question 2 he asks what is the loss thrown on the Ireland Development Grant by this issue of stock. The loss incurred is £3,300 annually. Then he asks as to the repayment of temporary loans made under Section 30 of the Act, and not yet repaid. The amount temporarily purchased under this section of the Irish Land Act amounts to £1,927,000. Then with regard to the other Question the Commissioners have sanctioned advances amounting to £956,659 in direct sales, of which £266,438 will be advanced on the 16th instant, and the remainder as soon as outstanding questions of title have been disposed of. Under Sections 6, 7, and 8, the Commissioners have agreed to buy estates, the purchase money of which amounts to £637,779, of which £55,624 will be advanced on the 16th instant, and the remainder as soon as the vendors have shown title and are in a position to allocate during the present sittings. Under Section 2 of the evicted Tenants Act, 1907, the Estates Commissioners have made offers for estates the purchase money of which amounts to £47,851, which will be advanced when the requirements of the statute have been complied with. Under Sections 72 and 79 the Congested Districts Board have agreed to buy estates, the purchase money of which amounts to £35,374, which will be advanced as soon as the vendors have shown title and are in a position to allocate during the present Trinity Law Sittings. That brings the total to £1,677,663. Now, the total advances on the 16th instant, which the noble Lord desired to know, are as follows:—By the Estates Commissioners, £322,000; by other Commissioners, £3,000; under the Labourers' Acts, £7,000; and for bonus, £18,000; making a total of £350,000. The Law Sittings of the present Trinity term terminate at the end of this month, after which advances cannot be made until the Courts resume their sittings and solicitors are in attendance. Possibly £500,000 may be required for all the purposes above stated on the 31st of this month, provided the vendors' solicitors are prepared to close their cases. It is not possible to forecast what moneys may be required in the interval from 31st July to 1st October, 1908, but judging from last year, £41,280 was drawn for advances under the Labourers Act between the end of July and the 1st October and £170,000 was drawn for bonus under orders made in Court prior to the 1st August. I think that gives the bulk of the information which the noble Lord desires.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: I am not surprised that my noble friend (Lord Clonbrock) should have asked His Majesty's Government why this loan was issued at the fixed price of 89½ instead of being issued to the National Debt Commissioners at 92, which was the certified price of the day. Of course the result will be a very considerable loss to the Irish Development Grant, and indirectly to the Irish ratepayers. I have had unfortunately perhaps more experience in the issue of Government loans than any Chancellor of the Exchequer for the last 100 years, and although I daresay I made some mistakes in connection with that important and responsible office, I do not think anybody ever accused me of issuing Government loans at too low a price to the public. I believe that I succeeded in securing a fair price for all the loans that I issued. Now, having had that experience, I will venture to say that it is my decided opinion that His Majesty's Government have issued this loan at too low a price. I believe that they might very easily have obtained something like ¾ per cent. more than they did. They issued the loan at a fixed price of 89½, as I have said, when similar stock in the market stood at 92, and when the market was a rising one. If they had issued this loan at a minimum price of 89½ I feel convinced they would have had tenders for it which would have made the average price probably as much as 90¼. I do not consider that good finance. I have no doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer went to the experts for his advice, as any Chancellor of the Exchequer naturally would; but my experience has been that experts are apt to be over-cautious in these matters, and although I have had to do with very large sums of this kind, and it would have been a very serious matter for the country if any of the loans issued during the South African War had failed, I took upon myself the responsibility of issuing loans at a higher price than the experts advised.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE, who had the following Question upon the Paper—

"To ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is able to make any announcement as to the dates at which the measures mentioned in His Majesty's Speech from the Throne, or any of those measures, are likely to come before this House"—

said: My Lords, since I put this Question upon the Paper the Prime Minister has made a statement in the House of Commons with regard to the position of public business—a statement which, at one moment, I hoped would afford a certain amount of illumination upon the point to which I most desire to draw your Lordships' attention. But the Prime Minister's statement, naturally enough, was directed to the situation in the House of Commons and not to the situation in the House of Lords. And it is to the situation in the House of Lords that I desire to direct the Question which stands in my name.

I do not think I misrepresent the feeling of a large number of your Lordships when I say that the prospect that lies before us in regard to the distribution of work between the two Houses is one which fills us with very considerable apprehension. It has always been a source of complaint in this House that we are not given sufficient opportunities for examining the measures which come before us. We are continually told that our principal business is the business of revision, but it seems to be forgotten that if revision is to be of the proper kind it must take place in a deliberate fashion; and, session after session, in the last hours, perhaps, of the time available, we are asked to consider measures which we have had no proper opportunity of examining. My Lords, that evil—that abuse—I daresay the noble Lord who leads the House will remind me of it—is an abuse which is of long standing; but on the other hand, it has never yet, I believe, reached the dimensions which it has now assumed; and that is due to the fact that in the other House of Parliament, Ministers resort more and more, with every session which passes, to expedients for curtailing debate which deny to the other Chamber of the Legislature full opportunity of discussing the Government Bills, and deny to this House the opportunity of considering the arguments which might be adduced for or against them. Now, although the Prime Minister's statement, made last Friday, does not throw much light upon the legislative proceedings in this House. Mr. Asquith made last month another statement which did contain some very important references to the general question. In that speech, which was coloured by a very sanguine and optimistic tone, the Prime Minister, after referring to the zeal and efficiency with which the different Departments of the Government were administered—and after dwelling upon the fact that there were no differences of opinion amongst his colleagues, or indeed no differences of any great moment amongst his followers, went on to say that in these very favourable circumstances—I will use his own words—

> "We have laid on the Table of the House of Commons a series of measures which, judged by their number, or still more by their importance and magnitude, would, at no remote date, have been regarded as adequate material for the life work of a whole Parliament."

The Prime Minister coupled this announcement with a few "precautionary words." He admitted that people may form a very varying estimate of the power of human endurance and of the capacity of the Parliamentary machine, and then he used this remarkable expression.

> "Unless there is to be a chronic overcrowding on the legislative high road, we must aim each year at a larger concentration of effort on a smaller number of objects."

That, to my mind, is a very admirable principle. We in this House, I suppose, may consider that we too are passengers on the Parliamentary machine, and we have, perhaps, a right to throw a glance upon the legislative high road and to conjecture, if we can, what the condition of the traffic is likely to be later on in the year through which we are passing. In the gracious speech from the Throne ten measures of first-rate importance were enumerated: the Old-Age Pensions Bill. the Licensing Bill, the Education Bill, the Bill dealing with Coal Mines, the Bill dealing with Housing and Town Planning, the English Land Values Bill, the Irish Universities Bill, the Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill, the Port and Waterway of London Bill, and the Bill for the Protection of Children; and there were, as I daresay your Lordships remember, the two Scottish Bills which were carried over from last session and which were introduced early in the year into your Lordships' House. Now, how does Parliament stand with regard to these Bills? The Old-Age Pensions Bill has come to your Lordships' House and was read a first time last Friday. The Licensing Bill has reached, or is about to reach, Committee Stage. Then we come to the Education Bill, The Education Bill was introduced amid much sound and fury; but it has faded out of our sight and we do not quite know whether it is dead or asleep. If the noble Earl is able to give us any glimpse of the present condition of that Bill I think the House will be grateful to him. The Coal Mines Bill is still, I understand, before a Standing Committee of the House of Commons. The Housing and Town Planning Bill has been only read a first time in the House of Commons. The English Land Values Bill has not been introduced. The Irish Universities Bill has reached the Report Stage. The Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill has not been introduced. The Port and Waterway of London Bill is still before a Joint Committee; and the Protection of Children Bill has only reached the Report Stage.

Then, my Lords, it comes to this—that we have one important measure, the Old-Age Pensions Bill, which has actually reached this House, and we have disposed of the two Bills which were carried over from last session; but with those exceptions, of this long list with which I have troubled your Lordships, not a single measure of importance is, as far as we are aware, likely to come before the consideration of your Lordships' House in the near future. Of course we are told that there is to be an autumn session. I am no opponent of autumn sessions. I doubt whether in this House they are as unpopular as in many other quarters; but they are open to this great objection, that they deprive Ministers, and all the working officials whose business it is to elaborate Government measures, of the comparative leisure and freedom from interruption for which they can only look at a time when the Government Offices are not liable to be disturbed by the alarums and excursions inseparable from the Parliamentary session. The result of an autumn session generally is, and it seems to me can scarcely fail to be, this—that the Government measures are introduced to Parliament in a crude and undigested state, greatly adding to the labours of both Houses and greatly diminishing the prospect of thoroughly considered and useful legislation.

This session falls, then, into two halves, the period which began in January last and will end the week after next, and the period which will begin on 12th October and will, I suppose, come to an end very near Christmas time. We know how we have fared with regard to the spring and summer portion of the session. We have now three weeks remaining, and we know exactly what work lies before us during those three weeks. We have the Old-Age Pensions Bill, greatly altered during its passage through the House of Commons, and only circulated to this House on Saturday last. I understand there is a chance that the Irish Universities Bill may reach us—probably the noble Earl will give us information upon that point. And I must not forget to mention the Finance Bill, about which I have no doubt some of your Lordships will have something to say. But may we be permitted to cast a glance upon the second portion of the session which is to begin in the month of October? We are apt to look upon an autumn session as a sort of boundless hinterland in which everybody who desires to promote legislation can stake out an unlimited claim of his own. But after all, my Lords, how long will the autumn session of this year last? Nine, or I suppose, at the utmost ten, weeks, and during that time His Majesty's Government will have to make what progress they can with that very formidable list of Bills which I read to the House just now. I see that besides those Bills, there are a bevy of minor measures which I have not particularised, and there are those private Members' Bills which His Majesty's Government are so fond of taking under their protection and of sending up to this House. I hope the noble Earl will be able to reassure us, but I venture to think that everything points to a repetition during next November or December—a repetition upon an even worse scale than anything which we have yet known—of the kind of legislative scramble to which this House has been used in the concluding days of the session of Parliament. I venture to say one word (I hope the noble Earl will not take it amiss) of warning. I believe that this House will resent, and will resist, the attempt to repeat, year after year, this process of rushing Bills through the House under conditions which render their proper examination impossible. I venture to recall a statement made by the late Prime Minister and mentioned the other evening in this House by my noble friend Lord Balfour of Burleigh, with reference to the conduct of the House of Lords in refusing to pursue the discussion of the Scottish Land Values Bill during the last few hours of the session. I rejoice to think that the propriety of our action was admitted by the late Prime Minister. And I am not without hopes that the present Prime Minister may be found disposed to take a similar view; for in a speech from which I have already quoted he used these words—

> "I am satisfied that the next, and the most urgent, step in the improvement of our procedure is that, either generally, or as regards particular measures, the non-completed work of one session may be resumed where it was left off."

I remember a colleague of the noble Earl opposite, Lord Tweedmouth, saying something of the same kind in this House, and I should like very much to be told to-night whether that statement represents the deliberate view of His Majesty's Government and whether they intend to act upon it. That plan of carrying over to another session the Bills which have not been adequately discussed may not be the best remedy, and may not be the only remedy; but of this I am convinced, that some remedy is urgently required for the state of things which I have tried to describe. I venture to say this, that nothing more indecent, nothing less conducive to the efficiency of our debates, nothing more likely to create feelings of annoyance and exasperation fatal to the proper conduct of our debates and to the examination of measures upon their true merits, can be conceived than the present arrangement under which the Government of the day brings in a huge and inflated programme under circumstances which render it absolutely impossible that this House should be given the opportunities to which it is entitled for examining the proposals of His Majesty's Government.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, of course we cannot complain that the noble Marquess has, at this period of the session, asked for some information with regard to the measures which His Majesty's Government contemplate proceeding with in your Lordships' House. As the noble Marquess has told us, the Old-Age Pensions Bill reached this House on Friday last, and was circulated on Saturday. I propose to take the Second Reading, if that is agreeable to the House, to-day week. I should have been prepared to take it on Thursday, but I understand that noble Lords opposite will be glad of a somewhat longer interval, although it is not a very long Bill. But I hope in this case it may be possible to proceed pretty quickly with the Committee stage. The Bill of course is one of the first importance, but it is very largely a Money Bill, and although there are parts of it which have nothing to do with money voted by the House of Commons, yet at the same time there are many important points in connection with it which are not of the character which your Lordships' House is used to discuss at any great length, or at any rate in great detail. Then the Finance Bill, as the noble Marquess has reminded us, will also be up very shortly. I understand that the Irish Universities Bill will be read a third time in another place in the latter part of next week, and therefore it will reach this House before we adjourn for our somewhat too brief holiday. That is not a Bill of a very controversial character, although it is one of great importance. With regard to the other measures to which the noble Marquess drew attention, I understand that the Children Bill, which is a very large measure, as your Lordships know, and one which I should think you would desire to discuss in some detail, will reach this House almost at the beginning of the autumn session. The Scottish Education Bill will also arrive about the same time. As your Lordships know, in another place the Licensing Bill will have been taken for one or two days in Committee before the adjournment, and I hope, therefore, that it will reach us at a period in November which will give us quite as full an opportunity of discussing its provisions as has ever been the case in a Bill of the same kind in your Lordships' House. As regards the Education

Bill, I am not able to say anything. The noble Marquess spoke of the "sound and fury" with which the Bill had been introduced, and I am afraid there has been far too much "sound and fury" about the whole affair ever since we have been in office; but that has certainly been by no means confined to ourselves. I am indeed not apprised of what the actual condition of the question is at this moment, and therefore I must ask the indulgence of the House in saying no more on the subject. I hope for the best in the matter. The Port of London Bill is being considered by a Joint Committee of both Houses, and I think it is fair to assume that when it comes up it is not a measure which will take a very great deal of time in this House, although it is sure to be subjected to very close examination when it gets here. It is the case that, as usual, we always seem to be too short of business in the early part of the session, and to have far too much crowded upon us at the end. It has always been so in my recollection of this House, and we have had these complaints reiterated, whoever has been in office, and whichever side has been in power at the time.

There has been one cause of delay to which the noble Lord did not draw attention, and that was that we lost a full fortnight by the lamented illness of the late Prime Minister and the change of Government. That was an event which could not have been foreseen at the time that the King's Speech was issued. Then the noble Marquess said—and I confess that I heartily agree with him—that there are very grave objections from the point of view of public convenience to the holding of autumn sessions, I myself should be very sorry to see it made a uniform practice. Last year we fortunately avoided it. Another year I hope we may also be fortunate enough to avoid it, but with the heavy programme which we have before us this year, and more particularly with regard to the untoward circumstance to which I have alluded, it became forced upon our minds at a very early date of the session that an autumn session was inevitable.

Then the noble Marquess said he desired to give us a warning that the time might come when the House of Lords would be tired of having Bills rushed through it, or attempted to be rushed through it, at the close of the session. It is perfectly true that the late Prime Minister never concealed his opinion, and never objected to stating it, that your Lordships' House had been badly treated in the matter of the Scottish Bills. I think we admitted it ourselves at the time, and there was no question that they came up too late at the end of the session, and my late right hon. friend stated that with the most absolute candour, as we should have expected of him. I quite agree that it is not fair to expect your Lordships' House to pass measures without full consideration, and I know that my right hon. friend, the present Prime Minister, is of the same opinion. Whether we shall be able to come to what is familiarly known as "carrying over," is a question on which I am sorry to say I am not able to enlighten the noble Marquess. It is a case which has strong recommendations, but, as we know, strong objections have also been entertained to it. If it is adopted at all, I hope it will always be adopted, so to speak, *ad hoc*, and in consideration of the particular circumstances and the particular measure, and that it will not become the general rule that all measures—especially those introduced by private Members of either House—are liable to be carried over from session to session. I can foresee nothing more inconvenient to any Government or more disastrous generally than that possibility. But I am quite sure that my right hon. friend and the Government generally will take into consideration once more, with a view to possible assistance and convenience, this question of carrying over. I can promise the noble Marquess that, but I am unable to say anything more positive at this moment.

EARL CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH: Can the noble Earl tell us anything about the Town Planning Bill?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I believe it is in Committee at this moment, but I am unable to say when it is likely to reach this House.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 13th July, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

Doncaster Corporation Bill ; Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill ; Swinton and Mexbrough Gas Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Barry Railway Bill [Lords].—Not amended, considered ; to be read the third time.

Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [Lords] ; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords] ; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords] ; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords] ; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—As amended. considered ; to be read the third time.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—As amended, considered.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 223 and 243 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read the third time.—(*The Deputy Chairman.*)

Bill accordingly read the third time,

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered ; to be read the third time.

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords] ; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords] ; Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [Lords] ; Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to :—Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill ; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill ; Camborne Water Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, " An Act for making further provision respecting the undertaking and debenture stock of the Crystal Palace Company ; and for other purposes." [Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act for incorporating and conferring powers upon the London and District Electricity Supply Company ; and for other purposes." [London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords].

Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords] ; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords].—Read the first time ; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Burry; Dundee; and Sheffield; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Forfar; and Lochurnoch; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NAVAL PRIZE MONEY ACCOUNT.

Order [6th July] that the Paper relative thereto be printed, read and discharged.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF ESSEX).

Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of the County of Essex altering certain Polling Districts in the South-Eastern Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 (EVICTION NOTICES).

Copy presented, of Return of Eviction Notices filed during the quarter ended 30th June, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (ARMY AND POPULATION).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 4th May; *Mr. Rees*]; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY OFFICERS AND COURTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1877 (RULES).

Copy presented, of Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges in Ireland regulating the mode of service of Civil Bill processes in ejectment and for recovery of rent in pursuance of The County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877, and of The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY OFFICERS AND COURTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1877 (RULES).

Copy presented, of Rules made by the Lord Chancellor and County Court Judges in Ireland under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented of Colonial Report, No. 564 (Ashanti, Annual Report for 1907) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Emilie Fritsche, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Elizabeth Fry Refuge, Hackney, E. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Report of the Advisory Board, London School of Economics, on the Second Course at the London School of Economics, October, 1907, to March, 1908, for the Training of Officers for the Higher Appointments on the Administrative Staff of the Army and for the Charge of Departmental Services [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Further Rules of Procedure for Courts-Martial [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Further Rules for Military Prisons and Detention Barracks [by Act] to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Further Regulations for the Army Reserve [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Lunacy.—Copy presented, of Table of Contents and Appendix to the Sixty-second Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy (presented 29th June) [by Act].

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887.

Return ordered, "of the number of persons against whom proceedings were instituted subsequently to the 19th day of July, 1887, the date on which the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, came into force, for each class of the offences specified in Sections II. and VII. of the Act, in the following form .—

Offence.	Number of persons proceeded against.			Number committed.							To find sureties or recognisances.	Appeals.		
	Total.	Discharged.	Convicted.	6 months and above 5.	5 months and above 4.	4 months and above 3.	3 months and above 2.	2 months and above 1.	1 month and above 14 days.	14 days and under.		Affirmed.	Reduced.	Reversed.
Section II. :—														
(1) Criminal conspiracy														
(2) Intimidation														
(3) (a) Riot or unlawful assembly														
(b) Forcible possession ..														
(c) Assault on or resistance to sheriff, constable, bailiff &c.														
(4) Inciting to above offences ..														
Section VII. :—														
(1) Taking part in meeting of suppressed branch of association described by special proclamation as dangerous association														
(2) Calling together meeting of ditto														
(3) Publishing notices calling together ditto														
(4) Publishing proceedings of ditto														
(5) Soliciting contributions for ditto														
Total														

the Returns to be for the period from the 19th day of July, 1887 to the 31st day of December, 1887, and for each of the years ended the 31st day of December, 1888 to 1892, inclusive, with a note indicating the date at which proceedings were last taken under the Act in 1892; and a Summary Return, in the same form, for the entire period 1887 to 1892; also similar Returns for the years ended the 31st day of December, 1901, 1902, and 1903, respectively, with notes indicating the dates at which proceedings were first and last taken, during this period, under the Act."—(*Mr. Long.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Tuberculosis amongst Irish Post Office Officials.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the number of Post Office employees in Ireland who have gone on sick leave during the present year suffering from tuberculosis; whether he is aware that Dr. Fitzgibbon, the medical officer to the department, has recently stated in Dublin that the Post Office officials work under conditions which favour the development of tuberculosis;

whether any steps will be taken to afford these officials better conditions of work, especially in regard to space, ventilation, and shorter hours, so as to mitigate the tendency to contract or to develop this disease; and whether he will consider the practicability of the Government making a contribution towards the establishment of sanatoria for members of the postal service in Ireland who have contracted this disease.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have not yet obtained the figures asked for, but will send them to the hon. Member as soon as possible. Dr. Fitzgibbon informs me that, in the remarks to which the hon. Member evidently refers, he spoke of the early morning hours of attendance which are inseparable from Post Office work as favourable to the development of tuberculosis when taken in conjunction with the defective ventilation of the homes of many of the Post Office staff in Dublin. He did not imply that tuberculosis was more prevalent among that staff than among the general public in Dublin, but asserted the exact opposite. Schemes for making sanatoria available for members of the postal service in Ireland have been brought before me, and if a practicable scheme is arranged by all those concerned I shall be glad to facilitate its execution in the same way as a similar scheme in this country has been assisted. I do not think, however, that I should be justified in proposing a grant from public funds.

Entrance Gate for Workmen on H.M.S. "Bellerophon" at Portsmouth Dockyard.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the joiners at present working on H.M.S. "Bellerophon" at the Royal Dockyard, Portsmouth, are compelled to lift and return their checks at the Marlborough Gate, and that this means that they have to walk to and from this gate twice daily in their own time, the time occupied in walking being forty-five minutes; whether he can state the reason why these men are not allowed to lift their tickets or checks at the Unicorn Gate, which is only two or three minutes walk from the ship; and whether he will give instruction that the workmen shall be allowed to lift their checks at the gate nearest to the ship upon which they are working.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The statements contained in the Question are in general accord with the facts, and arrangements will be made to meet the hon. Member's request as soon as possible.

Naval Manœuvres in the Moray Firth—Damage to Fisheries.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR MURRAY (Kincardineshire): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Channel Fleet, or any portion of it, is shortly to enter the Moray Firth for manœuvring purposes; whether the fleet, or any portion of it, has ever manœuvred in the Moray Firth during the herring fishery season; whether he is aware that a very large number of the East Coast fishing boats are now fishing in the Firth; and whether, in view of the possible disturbance of fishing operations, and the damage that may ensue to boats and gear should manœuvres take place inside the Firth, he will issue instructions to the effect that no manœuvres of the Fleet shall take place except outside the area of the Firth.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Moray Firth, in common with most of the North Sea, is included in the area within which the fleet exercises will shortly take place. The movements of the vessels engaged are at the discretion of the respective commanders-in-chief, and it is impracticable without inconvenient restrictions upon the exercises and training of His Majesty's ships to exclude fishing grounds altogether from the area over which such operations take place. With a view to avoiding damage, the commanders-in-chief are kept informed so far as practicable of the movements of the fishing vessels within the manœuvre area. Exercises were carried out there last July by the Channel Fleet.

Meals for School Children.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education what number, out of the total number of local education authorities in England and Wales, have taken action under Section 1 of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906, by associating with themselves school canteen committees, or by aiding such committees in furnishing buildings and officers for the service of such meals; how many local education authorities have applied to the Board of Education under Section 3 for authority to expend money out of rates for the provision of food; in how many cases has such application been granted, and in how many refused; and in how many instances during the year 1907 were proceedings instituted against parents for the recovery of the costs of meals under Section 2.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Orders authorising expenditure of money out of the rates upon the provision of food have been issued to fifty local education authorities; and in no case has the sanction of the Board been refused. The Board have no complete or collated nfiormation with reference to the remainder of the Question; but a circular to local authorities asking for certain statistics as to the action which has been taken under the Act is under consideration, and will shortly be issued.

Old-Age Pensions.

Sir F. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the resolution adopted by the Kettering Board of Guardians urging that the deserving aged poor over seventy years of age, who are excluded by having received outdoor relief since 1st January, 1908, should be transferred to the pensions list where the guardians guarantee the payment to the Exchequer of 90 per cent. of the cost of the pensions, until such time as the changes in the Poor Law now contemplated have been made; and whether he will introduce a supplementary Bill to carry out this object or give his support to a Bill introduced by a non-official Member for that purpose.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I have carefully considered the resolution referred to, but up to the present I have not received resolutions from any other boards of guardians countenancing the proposal made in the Question, and I have no reason to believe that it would be acceptable to the local authorities throughout the Kingdom.

Children Bill—Date of Report Stage.

Mr. MACLEAN (Bath): To ask the Prime Minister whether it is intended to take the Report Stage of the Children Bill before 1st August.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) No, Sir, that is not our intention.

Land Acquired in County Cork for Evicted Tenants.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what quantity of land in Cork County has been compulsorily acquired by the Estates Commissioners under the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907; what length of time usually elapses from the gazetting of untenanted land which it is proposed to acquire compulsorily and its final acquisition by the Commissioners; and how many evicted tenants have been actually placed back upon land so acquired in Cork County.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that up to the present they have published the necessary notices for the compulsory acquisition, under the Evicted Tenants Act, of some 800 acres of land in the County Cork, but they will not be in a position to acquire any of these lands until the times prescribed for the various steps under the Act and rules have expired, and until any objections which may be lodged by owners and persons interested have been heard and determined. The interval between the gazetting of the notices and the acquisition of the lands will vary according to the extent of the lands proposed to be acquired and the nature of the objections and appeals which may be lodged. Unless objections are completely waived by the owner and other persons interested the various stages under the Act and rules could not be completed in less than six months. Contested cases will necessarily take longer.

Belfast Boarded-out Children.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of male and female children boarded out by the Belfast Board of Guardians, and the average cost per head in each case; how many children under fifteen and over thirteen years of age are employed, with the approval of the guardians, as half-timers or otherwise in the mills and factories in Belfast; what is the amount of their earnings; what is the amount necessary for their maintenance; and whether any action is contemplated to give effect to the recommendations of the Local Government Board in regard to children put out by the guardians as half-timers.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have applied to the clerk of the Belfast Union for the required information, and as soon as it has been received I will communicate it to the hon. Member.

Irish Firms and Army Clothing Contracts.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the materials supplied by the War Office contractors in Ireland for Army forage caps can be procured from the stores or sample depot, Island Bridge, Dublin; and whether the inspection of the finished article can be carried out at that depot without the goods having to be forwarded to London.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The special conditions of contract which stipulate that the materials must be obtained from the Royal Army Clothing Department will in future be modified so as to permit of issue in Dublin as well as in Pimlico. It will not, however, be possible to arrange for the inspection of the finished article to be carried out eleswhere than at Pimlico.

Police and Rifle Shooting.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has considered the expediency of a proposal recently made by the Chief Constable of Denbighshire to train the police force of the United Kingdom in rifle shooting, and thereby utilise the 40,000 drilled and disciplined men as an auxiliary to the Territorial Army in Home defence.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This proposal has been considered; but, in view of the fact that during an invasion the police would be urgently required to maintain law and order, it can hardly be held to be a practical proposal.

Unconsecrated Military Chapels.

VISCOUNT DALRYMPLE (Wigton): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the total number of unconsecrated military chapels in the United Kingdom; and what are their names.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There are eighty-eight military unconsecrated churches and chapel schools. Divine service is also held in gymnasia, recreation rooms, and barracks rooms, etc.

Training of Irish Regiments.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether any Report has been received by him as to the suitability of Newtownards for carrying out the preliminary drill of recruits of the 4th battalion Royal Irish Rifles; whether he is aware that suitable barrack accommodation can be supplied on particularly advantageous terms; and whether, in view of the desirability of keeping the various battalions of the Royal Irish Rifles in their particular locality, he will reconsider the question and allow the Royal North Downs to continue their head-quarters at Newtownards.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The question has been considered, and it has been decided that the recruits must drill at the depot. The general officer commanding-in-chief reports that suitable barrack accommodation is not available at Newtownards. The head quarters of the unit will remain at Newtownards.

Annual Leave of Postal Servants.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state how many days annual leave are actually allowed in the Post Office to clerks of the Upper Division of ten years' service, clerks of the Upper Division of less than ten years' service, and staff officers whose scale of pay exceeds the maximum in the Second Division.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The existing rule fixes twenty-eight days in each of these cases, in addition to the half-holiday every Saturday, which is given if the state of business permits.

Employment of Discharged Telegraph Messengers.

MR. W. T. WILSON: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that telegraph messengers reaching the age of sixteen are being discharged from the Post Office, and in some cases re-employed as auxiliary postmen with little or no break in their service; whether this practice has been sanctioned by him; and whether the employment of these lads on postmen's work, depriving them as it does of any opportunity to learn other occupation, does of itself constitute a claim to appointment.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I do not encourage the employment of ex-telegraph messengers as auxiliary postmen; but in some cases they press very strongly to be admitted to such employment. But no claim on the Post Office is created by the acceptance under the conditions of the employment in question.

Post Offices in the United Kingdom.

MR. T. R. BETHELL (Essex, Maldon): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state the number of post offices and sub-post offices in the United Kingdom and the net revenue derivable therefrom; and if he will give this information separately with regard to the London postal district.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Full information as to the number of post offices and sub-offices in the United Kingdom and in London is given on page 27 of the Postmaster-General's Report for 1907. That Report also gives the net revenue of the Post Office, but it is impossible to earmark any particular portion of that revenue as derived from particular offices.

Annual Leave of Upper Division Clerks.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state how many days annual leave are actually allowed in the Treasury to clerks of the Upper Division of ten years' service, clerks of the Upper Division of less than ten years' service, and staff officers whose scale of pay exceeds the maximum in the Second Division; and how many days annual leave are granted to the corresponding classes in the Inland Revenue Department and in the Customs.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) As regards leave granted to staff officers, I beg to refer the hon. Member to my Answer of 26th May last. The leave actually granted to clerks of the Higher Division in the Treasury is the maximum allowed under the Order in Council quoted in that Answer, but in the Inland Revenue Department officers of more than ten years' service are only allowed forty-two days' leave if their salary does not exceed £500 a year; above that limit they are allowed the maximum forty-eight days. There are no Higher Division officers in the Customs.

Promotion of Second Division Clerks in the Estate Duty Office.

MR. FIELD. To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will explain why certain Second Division clerks in the Estate Duty Office, whom it is desired to promote to the first Division on the ground of special competency and merit, and of whom many are already performing First Division duties, are offered such promotion only on condition that they submit to a reduction of their salaries whereby they will receive, during at least seventeen years after promotion, less remuneration in the aggregate than they would receive as Second Division clerks.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The conditions of promotion to the First Division in the case of the clerks referred to were settled prior to the issue of the Order in Council of 21st December, 1907, and were based on the scale of salary in force for Second Division clerks before that date. The grant of a new scale to the Second Division by the said Order in Council cannot be held to constitute any reason for varying the conditions thus prescribed for promotion to the First Division. The same principle has been applied to similar cases in other departments of the public service.

Oxford Circus Flower Sellers.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Metropolitan Borough of Marylebone contemplate preventing the flower-sellers at Oxford Circus from plying their trade, after having had this privilege for sixteen years; and whether he can bring any influence to bear to allow this trade to remain as it is.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have made inquiry on this subject, and am informed that the Public Health Committee of the borough council, in consequence of representations made to them, have modified their recommendations with regard to the removal of the flower-sellers from their present position. I understand that the Committee would now allow the flower-sellers to remain until 29th September, 1909, but that they recommend that after that date these persons should not be allowed to occupy the position, and that public notice should be given that no one will, in future, be allowed to occupy such position for any purpose whatever. The matter is one for the decision of the Borough council, to whom the recommendation of the Committee will be submitted on the 16th instant. I have no jurisdiction to interfere with regard to it, but I should hope it might be found practicable to allow the flower-sellers to remain.

Increased Salaries of Irish Veterinary Department Officials.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he can state the reasons which weighed with the Department of Agriculture and the Treasury when granting increases of salary to the higher officials of the veterinary branch, seeing that in three cases alone these increases involve an additional expenditure of £350 a year, viz., £150 extra to the chief clerk, £100 to the chief inspector, and two sums, one of £25 and another of £75, to the senior staff clerk; whether he can further state the reasons that have influenced the Department in withholding at the same time admittance to the Second Division in the case of the gentlemen of fourteen years' service in the same branch; and whether he has sanctioned the action of these officials.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) I would refer to my reply to the hon. Member's Question of 17th June, to which I have nothing to add.

School Attendance and Outdoor Relief.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): To ask the President of the Board of Education if provision will be made in the Education Bill now before the House for the repeal of Section 40 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, which requires boards of guardians to enforce the attendance at school of the children of persons in receipt of out-door relief as a condition for granting such relief, in order that the sole responsibility for enforcing attendance shall be placed on the school-attendance officer.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave to a similar Question on 11th May. The responsibility of enforcing school attendance rests solely with the local education authority, and I do not think the operation of Section 40 detracts in any way from that responsibility.

Strangford Whistling Buoy.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the cost of a whistling buoy, which has been recommended by the Irish Lights Commissioners to be moored off Strangford Bar; and whether, in taking into consideration the cost, he will also bear in mind the dangerous nature of the coast which it is proposed to protect, as also the fact that during the autumn and winter severe weather is experienced in that particular locality.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Commissioners of Irish Lights estimate that the cost of a whistling buoy and duplicate with moorings will be £1,000 if placed with twelve months, and that the cost will be practically twice as great if the buoy is placed within three months. All the circumstances of the locality will be taken into consideration.

Landing of Trawled Fish.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the policy of excluding British trawlers from the Moray Firth, he can state why the prohibition to land trawled fish from those waters does not apply to English as well as to Scottish ports; and whether he will take steps to secure the co-operation of other Departments in extending the prohibition to land such fish to all ports in the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) In reply to the first part of my hon. friend's Question I may inform him that, while it is legally competent to prohibit the landing of trawl-caught fish in Scotland, there is no such power in England. In regard to the second part of the Question I can add nothing to the reply given to the hon. Member for Banffshire on 22nd June.

Prosecutions for Illegal Trawling.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the Lord-Advocate if he will state the number of prosecutions for trawling within the three-mile limit off the Scottish coasts, giving the number of prosecutions and convictions for each county.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw.*) In answer to my hon. friend I have ascertained that there were prosecutions for trawling within the three-mile limit during the year 1907, as follows, viz.:—Fife, 2; Inverness, 2; Elgin, 1; Ross, 2; Caithness, 4; Shetland, 24; Argyll, 2; convictions being obtained in all the cases with the exception of three in Shetland. For the year 1908 there have been prosecutions as follows, viz.:—Fife, 2; Aberdeen, 2; Elgin, 1; Ross, 2; Shetland, 8; Caithness, 2; convictions being obtained in all cases except one Caithness prosecution. Several prosecutions are at present pending.

Work of Secretaries of the National Education Board.

MR. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there are two secretaries of the National Education Board paid to do work that could easily be done by one competent official, and that, nowithstanding this, many letters from managers, teachers and others remain unanswered for three, six, and even twelve months at a time, resulting in serious public inconvenience; and whether he can say, in view of the foregoing circumstances, upon what grounds the salary of each of these officials has been lately increased to the extent of £100 a year.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) There have been two secretaries almost since the formation of the National Education system. I am informed that the duties of the secretaries are of a highly responsible character and extremely laborious, and it would be impossible for the work to be done by one official. Apart from the general work of administration, the correspondence of the office is very extensive. In 1907 the number of letters received from managers and teachers was 24,308, the number received from inspectors and other officials, 13,583, and the number received from other Government Departments, 4,067, making a total of 42,228, exclusive of school reports, returns, and similar matters. The correspondence is dealt with systematically and without unnecessary delay, and comparatively few complaints of delay, arising from oversight, are received. The salaries of the secretaries have been increased because, in recent years, the duties of these officers have become onerous and complex. It is to be remembered that much of the educational administration which in Eng- and Scotland devolves upon local authorities is necessarily undertaken in Ireland by the National Education Office.

Belfast Winter Assize Court and Civil Appeals.

Mr. GEORGE CLARK (Belfast, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, referring to the Question asked on 18th June last year with reference to what steps were being taken to confer upon the winter Assize Court at Belfast the jurisdiction necessary to enable such court to hear and determine Civil Bill Appeals, and to the Answer of the Chief Secretary, he will say if it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill to confer the necessary jurisdiction before the sitting of the next winter Assize Court, viz., in December of this year.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It has not yet been found possible to carry into effect the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill on this subject. The matter will not be lost sight of, but I am not in a position to promise that the necessary legislation will be introduced during the current session.

Fees of Solicitors to the Irish Local Government Board

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the solicitors to the Local Government Board for Ireland have claimed to be paid a fee of £4 14s. 2d. for the costs of the formal approval by them on behalf of the Board of a lease granted by the Corporation of Londonderry to one Mary J. M'Girr, of Corporation property in Londonderry, and that, on a protest by the solicitors of the said Mary J. M'Girr, the demand for the payment of this fee was withdrawn; whether the solicitors to the Local Government Board for Ireland are paid a yearly salary for legal assistance to the Board; whether credit is given in the public accounts for fees received by the solicitors to the Local Government Board for Ireland on approval of deeds in which the Local Government Board are parties; whether his attention has been called to the amount of the fee proposed to be charged in the case referred to, considering that there were eight leases, all similar in terms, being granted by the Corporation to different persons; whether he can say on what authority the solicitors to the Local Government Board for Ireland attempted to charge fees in this case, seeing that the Board had made an order authorising the letting by lease of the ground by the Corporation; whether any fee is claimed by the solicitors to the Land Commission or the solicitors to the Board of Works for approval of conveyances, leases, or other documents made by them to public bodies or private individuals; and if he can state what is the practice in similar cases in England.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The statements in the first part of the Question are correct, save that the approval was not formal. As a matter of fact, the draft of a fee-farm grant instead of a lease was sent for approval, and a correction was made accordingly. The solicitors to the Local Government Board are not paid by way of salary, and, consequently, the question of giving credit does not arise. The lease referred to was submitted to the Board's solicitors for approval, and they considered the Board a necessary party. They applied for payment of the costs in accordance with the prevailing practice, but, subsequently, the Board consulted counsel, and having some doubt as to whether they were a necessary party they gave the benefit of the doubt to the local authority, and included the solicitors' fees in the law charges of the Department. I am informed that no fee is claimed by the solicitors of the Land Commission for the approval of conveyances or leases made by the Commission, but in the case of the Board of Works a fee of £2 2s. is charged. I have no information as to the practice in England.

Mr. HUGH LAW: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, since the passing of the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, the solicitors to the Local Government Board for Ireland countersign all orders made by the Board's inspectors for improvement schemes under the Labourers Acts; whether a fee, and, if so, how much, is paid by the Board to their solicitors for signing such orders; whether, before the passing of the said Act of 1906, the solicitors to the Board were not required to sign or approve of orders made for improvement schemes under the Labourers Acts; and if he can state the necessity for the signature of the Local Government Board's solicitors to all orders made since 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The orders are prepared by the solicitors to the Local Government Board for signature by the inspector, and not merely countersigned by the solicitors, as implied in the Question. The solicitors also advise the inspectors on legal points arising in connection with the schemes into which they are inquiring. A fee of £5 5s. is paid to the solicitors for their services in relation to each scheme and order. This fee covers all legal advice given to the inspectors, and is very much less than the solicitors received prior to the Act of 1906, when they were paid by taxed costs. Then, as now, the solicitors prepared the orders, but as the orders before 1st November, 1906, were signed by the Local Government Board, it was not deemed necessary that the name and address of their solicitors should also be printed at the foot of the order, as is now considered advisable, in view of the fact that the address of an inspector may vary from day to day and that the Board's powers in relation to such orders are limited to the consideration of petitions presented to them against the orders. Appeals also lie to the County Courts, and it is obviously desirable that the orders should be prepared by legal hands.

MR. HUGH LAW: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the fees payable under the Labourers (Ireland) Order, 1906, to solicitors for rural district councils for approving of the titles of both owners and occupiers of lands taken by such councils for the erection of labourers cottages, under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts; whether the fee allowed is the same, irrespective of whether the purchase-money of the lands taken is under or over £60; whether, in the case of the purchase-money of the lands taken being over £60, the solicitors to the district councils must see that an indefeasible title in fee is given to their respective councils by the owners of the lands; and whether, seeing that the solicitors to the Local Government Board recently claimed the sum of £4 14s. 2d. as a fee for formally approving of a lease about to be granted to one Mary J. M'Girr by the Londonderry Corporation of a plot of ground in Londonderry, and comparing this fee with the fees allowed to solicitors of rural district councils under the Labourers (Ireland) Order, 1906, the Board will consider the scale of fees payable to solicitors of rural district councils under the said Labourers (Ireland) Order, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The fee payable, one guinea per plot, is prescribed by Rule 53, Paragraph 3, of the Local Government Board's Order of 1906. The reply to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative. As regards the third part of the Question the sufficiency of the title is a matter for the council's solicitor. There does not appear to be any similarity between the two kinds of costs referred to in the concluding portion of the Question.

One-Room Tenements in Portadown.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of one-room tenements in Portadown, and the number of such tenements occupied by more than one person, with the number of persons in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) According to the Census Returns of 1901, there were on 31st March of that year nine tenements of one room in the Portadown urban district. Four of these tenements were occupied by one person only, one by two persons, one by three persons, one by four persons, one by five persons, and one by seven persons. No statistics of a more recent date are available.

Contracts to Firms Connected with Irish Public Boards.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether there is any rule forbidding contracts or orders being given to firms directly or indirectly connected with public boards in Ireland; and what is the nature of the rule.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This matter is dealt with by statute. The principal provision is contained in Article 12 of the schedule to the Application of Enactments Order, 1898. Other enactments will be found in Section 93 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838, Section 11 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1851, and Section 270 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878.

Sale of the Brooke Estate.

Mr. HUGH LAW: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners are now willing to permit the consolidation, for the purposes of sale, of the Brooke estate (Sir Arthur Wallace), situated between Foxhall and Churchill, County Donegal, with the estate held under the same title situated near Ramelton, with a view to facilitating the completion of the purchase transaction relating to the former.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners deal with estates in the order in which purchase agreements are lodged. In the case of the two estates referred to in the Question the agreements were lodged in July, 1905, and April, 1908, respectively. The Commissioners cannot see their way to give the second estate the same priority as that in which agreements were lodged nearly three years earlier.

Application of James Sisk, Evicted Tenant.

Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have considered the application of James Sisk, an evicted tenant, for reinstatement in the farm of Sheepwalk, on the Fleury estate, Glenwood, County Cork; whether the Commissioners are aware that Michael Walsh, the present occupier of the farm, is willing to give it up and has so notified the landlord, who is also willing to sell the farm to the Commissioners for the purpose of reinstating James Sisk; and if, under these circumstances, the Commissioners will endeavour to effect a settlement.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have fully considered the application of James Sisk for reinstatement in a holding which is now in the occupation of his brother-in-law, Michael Walsh, and have decided to take no action in the matter.

Holding for James Melia of Diamor.

Mr. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether James Melia, Diamor, Crossakiel, Kells, County Meath, applied for a holding on the Kearney estate at Galmoystown, and if his application was rejected; and whether, in the event of the Estates Commissioners purchasing any untenanted land in the district, his claim will be considered.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners were unable to allot to James Melia a parcel of the untenanted land on the Kearney estate, but will consider his application in connection with the allotment of any other untenanted land which they may acquire in the district.

Reinstatement of Matthew Brady of Stonefield.

Mr. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Matthew Brady, Stonefield, Virginia Road, County Meath, has applied to the Estates Commissioners to be reinstated in his former holding; and if the Commissioners have approached its present occupant with a view to acquiring it for the reinstatement of its former tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that Matthew Brady applied for reinstatement in a holding which is in the occupation of another person who has purchased it under the Land Acts. The Commissioners have no power to interfere in such case. They offered Brady first one and then another holding elsewhere and he declined both, and the Commissioners have decided to take no further action whatever upon his application.

Belfast Licensed Premises Valuation.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of

Ireland whether he is aware that dissatisfaction exists amongst the licensed traders of Belfast in regard to the valuation of their houses, which they consider excessive; and whether he could hold out to them any near prospect of a revision of the valuation so as to bring it more into accord with justice and equity.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) There is an annual revision of the valuation when, if a case is listed for revision, any circumstances which may have arisen since the revaluation was made, affecting the letting value of the premises, are taken into account.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Volunteer Naval Reserve—Aberdeen Recruits.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he is aware of the existence of a large body of men in Aberdeen and vicinity, of whom some hundreds would in all probability be at once available, prepared to join the Volunteer Naval Reserve if the opportunity were given them, by the formation of a branch in Aberdeen on similar lines to the branch at present in Glasgow, also of the feeling and desire on the part of the community for the creation of such a force in Aberdeen; if he can state whether the Admiralty Volunteer Committee have considered the matter; and whether he will cause local inquiries to be made on the subject during the autumn with a view to action.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): Representations have been received from certain gentlemen at Aberdeen to this effect. The matter is receiving the consideration of the Admiralty Volunteer Committee, but as no provision has been made in the Navy Estimates, it is not proposed to create a new division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at Aberdeen this year.

Naval Dissensions.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Reg's): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, in view of the grave disapprobation expressed by the Board of Admiralty to the Rear-Admiral commanding the First Cruiser Squadron for his signal reflecting on an order of the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, whether the Rear-Admiral complied with their Lordships censure by making a written apology to the Commander-in-Chief, and, if so, on what date.

Mr. McKENNA: The incident referred to by my hon. friend occurred as far back as November, 1907. The present Board of Admiralty regard it as closed, and consider it inadvisable to answer further Questions on the subject.

Mr. BELLAIRS: May I ask if, when the Board of Admiralty administered this grave censure, they took any steps to find out if the Rear-Admiral complied with the terms of the censure by making a written apology?

Mr. McKENNA: I do not accept my hon. friend's statement as complete, but I can only repeat what I have said: the Admiralty consider it inadvisable to answer further Questions on the subject.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to say I made no statement of facts. I asked a Question, which has not been answered.

Naval Return—Fleets.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, when the Annual Return, Fleets (Great Britain and Foreign Countries), will be available for the information of the House; and whether there is any reason for departing from the usual practice of circulating this Return some time previous to the discussion of the Shipbuilding Vote.

Mr. McKENNA: The proof of the Return has been submitted to me to-day. Its preparation was delayed owing to some correspondence between the Admiralty and my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean and the hon. Member himself, but had Vote 8 not been taken somewhat earlier than usual this year, it would have been issued before the discussion of the Vote.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: So far as I am concerned there has been no correspondence for some months. Will no information be forthcoming as to the comparative strength of British and foreign fleets before the debate on the Navy Votes closes ?

Mr. McKENNA : I am exceedingly sorry the Return is not ready, but I shall be happy to let the hon. Gentleman see the proof which reached me only this morning.

Soldiers' Pensions.—Case of James M'Alenchy.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the case of James M'Alenchy, of Union Street, Strabane, who, having served for five years in India and Burma in the Inniskilling Fusiliers and twelve years in the Donegal Militia, was discharged in May last, after a total of seventeen and-a-half years' service, with a testimonial of very good character but without a pension, his discharge being due to confirmed ill-health and debility ; and whether, having regard to M'Alenchy's state of health and long service, and to the fact that he has a large family in poverty, any steps will be taken by the War Office Authorities to provide him with relief by way of pension or otherwise.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington) : This case is being investigated and the decision arrived at will be communicated to the hon. and learned Member as soon as possible.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL : I will put this Question down again this day week. I will be quite candid with the right hon. Gentleman. I want the Answers to these Questions to be given in public.

Mr. HALDANE : And I will be quite candid too. I do not think it possible to get the Answers so soon.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL : Oh ! I know quite well what the Answer will be.

The Militia and the Special Reserve.

Major RENTON (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many men have been transferred from the artillery and infantry Militia to the corresponding arms of the Special Reserve ; how many men have joined the artillery and infantry of the Special Reserve as recruits ; and how many men who have been transferred to, or have joined the Special Reserve, have passed, or are about to pass, to the Regular Army on completion of the prescribed period of service in the Special Reserve.

Mr. HALDANE : The figures up to the 1st July are as follows :

	Transferred.	Recruits.	Joined Regular Army.
Artillery.	2885	1585	53
Infantry.	18274	9198	1057

One Return for an Artillery unit is not complete. There are no Returns at the War Office showing the number of men who intend to join the Regular Army.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) : How many men are there now in the Special Reserve ?

Mr. HALDANE : Roughly speaking, I should say about 35,000. But I have given the figures and the hon. Member can do the arithmetic.

Alleged Espionage by Foreigners.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) : I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will name the civilised countries in which foreigners are allowed full liberty to collect information concerning accommodation, stores, &c., which might be useful in time of war.

Mr. HALDANE : I am not aware of any civilised country in which foreigners are allowed full liberty to collect information which might be useful in time of war.

Colonel LOCKWOOD : Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will remember that in his Answer to a former Question he stated that in nearly all civilised countries with which he was acquainted this was allowed.

Mr. HALDANE : No ; you can go about and sketch anywhere, except in fortresses and other places where there are restrictions.

Colonel LOCKWOOD : I put my Question as plainly as I could, and the right hon. Gentleman told me——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he has any information concerning a staff ride through England organised by a foreign Power.

MR. HALDANE: The reply is in the negative.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any official information or reports from chief constables in the Eastern Counties as to espionage in England by foreign nations; and, if so, whether he attaches any importance to the information.

MR. HALDANE: Unofficial reports have reached me with regard to the presence of supposed spies in various parts of England, and certain inquiries have been instituted. They do not, however, lead me to attach great importance to the matter, or suggest the necessity of immediate legislative action.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman looks upon the system of espionage as but an amusing recreation on the part of foreign Powers?

MR. HALDANE: I have not the slightest evidence that any foreign Power is sending spies here, and I have reason to think the contrary. That officers of all nations when abroad look about for useful information I have no doubt; but that is a different thing from coming as spies.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: I may be able to extract some definite information from the right hon. Gentleman when his salary comes before the House for discussion.

3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, with reference to the promised disbandment of the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards, and his speech in this House on 12th July, 1906, on this subject in which he said with regard to this matter *transivit in rem judicatam*, but that an interval of time would be necessary before the judgment could be carried out, whether he is now able to inform the House when this long-promised measure of relief to the British taxpayer is to be effected; and, having in view the peaceful state of Egypt, and the fact that there are already a Cavalry regiment and four battalions of Infantry, besides departmental corps, stationed in the country, he will now inform the House when the battalion in question is to be ordered home for disbandment.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, may I ask whether he accepts the implication that the disbandment of regiments which maintain peace in outlying parts of the Empire is likely to prove a measure of relief to the British taxpayer?

MR. HALDANE: That is a subtle question into which I cannot now enter. As to the Question on the Paper I have no further information to give my hon. friend on this subject at present.

MR. H. C. LEA: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is now two years since he promised the House that this battalion would be disbanded? I venture now to press him for an assurance that his promise will be carried out.

MR. HALDANE: The battalion is serving a useful purpose in Egypt. I told the House two years ago that that was so, and I cannot put a definite term to their service.

MR. ASHLEY: Is it not the fact that the peaceful condition of Egypt is due to the presence of this battalion?

MR. HALDANE: I should be sorry to speculate on that.

Gibraltar Garrison.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state during what number of hours out of each twenty-four the gunners were on duty at Gibraltar during the recent mobilisation of the garrison; and whether the number of gunners in the garrison is sufficient to keep the batteries continuously manned in the event of a siege.

MR. HALDANE: It is not possible to give any estimate of the number of hours in each day that the gunners were on duty. The number of gunners is considered adequate to provide against any attack to which Gibraltar is likely to be exposed.

MR. ASHLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that if the fortress were besieged the gunners would have proper rest?

MR. HALDANE: I do not think that when a fortress is besieged the gunners can have proper time for rest.

Woolwich Common.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is proposed by his Department to enclose or build upon any land now treated as common land in Woolwich or the neighbourhood.

MR. HALDANE: It is proposed to erect buildings for the Royal Army Medical Corps on the north side of Shooters Hill Road, opposite to the Hospital buildings. This land forms part of Woolwich Common, which is War Department freehold, over which the public have no rights, except such as are enjoyed by consent of the War Department.

LORD BALCARRES: Is not this particular bit of land within the powers of the Metropolitan Act, upon which no buildings may be erected?

MR. HALDANE: If the noble Lord is right, the War Department is breaking the law, but I do not think they are. Perhaps he will put down a Question.

LORD BALCARRES: I would like to press this, as we are nearing the end of the session. Was it not proposed by the War Office to build upon Eltham Common recently, and was it not proved to their satisfaction that they would be acting illegally in doing so, and was not their claim abandoned?

MR. HALDANE: No; it was abandoned out of consideration for the public, and we did not wish to infringe on Eltham Common. If the noble Lord wants information, I think I can promise it definitely next Monday.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: If the land is taken from the use of the public, will the War Office give a fresh piece of land to it?

MR. HALDANE: It is not common land taken from the public; it is private land belonging to the War Office.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the propriety of giving other land in place of it?

MR. HALDANE: Certainly not.

Territorial Field Artillery.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether rifles have been issued to the men of the Territorial Field Artillery and ammunition columns.

MR. HALDANE: Non-commissioned officers and men of the Field Artillery units and ammunition columns are not required to fire a musketry course, and no issues of rifles have been made to newly raised units or ammunition columns. The Army Council are however considering whether rifles or carbines should be issued, though a compulsory course is not prescribed. Meanwhile, the units formed from Volunteer Corps have been allowed to retain their arms.

MR. ASHLEY: Is it not the fact that the Regular Artillery have carbines issued to them?

MR. HALDANE: I rather think that is so.

Territorial Artillery Adjutants.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an officer of the Royal Horse Artillery who takes up the appointment of adjutant in the Territorial Artillery will, on vacating that position, be entitled to be posted back to a Horse Artillery Battery.

MR. HALDANE: If not promoted in the meantime such an officer will be considered for re-appointment to the Horse Artillery.

MR. ASHLEY: Have they a right to re-appointment?

MR. HALDANE: Nobody has a right.

MR. ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman get Horse Artillery officers to take these appointments in the Territorial force?

MR. HALDANE: The Regular officers have shown a magnificent spirit in coming forward so far.

Territorial Artillery Training.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that in many cases the training of the Territorial Artillery units has been unsatisfactory owing to the deficiency of *matériel* and the insufficient numbers of the permanent staff, he can see his way to authorise training classes for such units during the coming winter.

MR. HALDANE: The Regulations provide for the formation of courses at any time of the year for the Territorial Artillery. There will be no difficulty in continuing the training of all ranks throughout the winter.

MR. ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman sanction this course being taken? It is very important to give the men proper training.

MR. HALDANE: That rests with the General Officer Commanding.

Episcopalian Churches in India.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he will state the amount granted by this country for the support of Episcopalian churches connected with military stations in India, and under which Vote it is taken; whether any grant is given for the same purpose by the Council or Government in India; and, if so, how much.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): Nothing is granted from British revenues for the support of Episcopalian or other churches at military stations in India. The hon. Member will find full particulars of the charges for ecclesiastical establishments borne on the revenue of India in a Return presented to the House on the 3rd March last.

White Labour in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the experiment of finding work in the mines of the Transvaal for the unemployed white workmen has now been concluded; if it has been successful; how many men were found work; and how many are now continuing to work.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): The employment of unskilled white labour I believe continues, and according to the Chamber of Mines Executive Committee's Report for May, which is the latest information received, the mines had been asked to find work for a further 350 men, and 126 had actually been placed. The cost of the work is at present somewhat higher than that of Kaffirs.

MR. FELL: Do those men remain on the mines?

COLONEL SEELY: Some remain and some do not.

MR. FELL: Is it not owing to the fact that white men refuse to do work that a large amount of the trouble in the Transvaal has arisen?

[No Answer was returned.]

Wireless Telegraphy between British Guiana and Trinidad.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any definite steps have been, or are being, taken to provide a system of wireless telegraphy between British Guiana and Trinidad in accordance with the arrangement entered into in November, 1907.

COLONEL SEELY: Negotiations for the establishment of a system of wireless telegraphy between Trinidad and British Guiana have been in progress for some little time. I hope that they will be completed shortly; the actual work of setting up the apparatus will then be taken in hand.

Carib Canal.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the amount of the floating balance of revenue in St. Vincent from which he has suggested that a loan of £5,000 may be made for the purpose of re-opening the Carib Canal; and what is the amount of the undisposed balance of the relief fund, subscribed in 1902, from which the Governor of the Leeward Islands, the Administrator, and the Legislative Council of St. Vincent recommended that a loan should be made for this purpose.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State did not suggest a loan of £5,000, but said that he would on certain conditions agree to a loan not exceeding that sum. The actual amount of the floating balance of revenue available cannot be stated, but it is probably between £4,000 and £5,000; I cannot say how much of this could be utilised for a loan. The invested portion of the Eruption Fund amounts to £25,000. All the rest of the fund—or practically all the rest—has now been expended or definitely allocated for expenditure.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Is it not the fact as stated in the Question that the Governor of the Leeward Islands, the Administrator and the Legislative Council recommended a loan for this purpose for the invested funds? Why would not the Colonial Office give its sanction?

COLONEL SEELY: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman means the Governor of the Windward Islands.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: With that correction is it not so?

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot say. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will verify the facts before he repeats the Question.

Cable Communication with British Guiana.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can state the number of days during the year 1907, and the first six months of 1908 respectively upon which cable communication with British Guiana was interrupted.

COLONEL SEELY: I am informed that cable communication between Trinidad and Demerara was interrupted for thirty-one days in 1907 and for forty-five days during the first six months of 1908.

Railway Construction in East Africa.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the financing of schemes of railway construction in East Africa, whether he will see that at least one mile of land on each side of any proposed railways for which British funds are required is retained as Crown land for the benefit of the British taxpayers, as security for any loan or for the return of any grant in aid till such loan or grant is repaid with compound interest.

COLONEL SEELY: My hon. friend may rest assured that in any scheme which may be approved for financing schemes of railway construction in East Africa the Secretary of State will do his best to safeguard the interests to the British taxpayer, but he is unwilling to decide in advance the method by which this object may be best secured.

MR. WEDGWOOD: Will the House have an opportunity of discussing this question before the Estimates are passed?

COLONEL SEELY: I suppose the opportunity will arise on my noble friend's salary.

*MR. REES: Is the hon. Gentleman not aware it is customary for companies to retain a certain amount of land on either side of such railways when constructed by other than official agency?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes; but my hon. friend is asking the Secretary of State to pledge himself to a particular width of land.

MR. WEDGWOOD: But was not one mile reserved on each side of the Uganda Railway?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, Sir.

Transvaal Voters' Roll.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to certain allegations reflecting on the voters' roll compiled under the late Crown Colony Government in the Transvaal, and on the care and good faith of the officials entrusted with the task of that compilation; whether he is aware that the Earl of Selborne specifically repudiated those allegations, and that no evidence has at any time been produced in support of them; and whether he will lay the correspondence between the Earl of Selborne and the Colonial Office relating to the matter.

COLONEL SEELY: It is well known that suspicion was frequently cast in statements publicly made in the Transvaal on the accuracy of the Voters' List; nor do I think this suspicion can be regarded as surprising when it is remembered that the list contained the names of 46,203 voters, whereas the census figures showed that the total number of white male adults on the Rand only eighteen months earlier was only 43,054. But it is true that Lord Selborne expressed the opinion that the doubts cast upon the accuracy of the list were not justified, and His Majesty's Government have no desire to dissociate themselves from that opinion. But the whole matter is now closed and the Secretary of State deprecates the revival of a controversy which is no longer of any public interest.

MR. LYTTELTON: Is not the effect of that answer that His Majesty's Government now say there was no absence of good faith in the officials entrusted with the compilation of the Voters' List, and that they also admit that Lord Selborne from the first strenuously asserted that fact?

COLONEL SEELY: I can only repeat what I have stated, that His Majesty's Government do not wish to dissociate themselves from Lord Selborne, nor from the view of Lord Selborne as explained by Lord Elgin in the House of Lords on 31st July, 1906, that he approved of the settlement arrived at; and in view of that fact they do not wish to revive the controversy.

MR. LYTTELTON: When the right hon. Gentleman says that his Majesty's Government do not wish to dissociate themselves from Lord Selborne, does that mean in plain English that they agree or do not agree with Lord Selborne?

COLONEL SEELY: Surely it is impossible to state more than I have stated. There is no proof in the possession of the Government that there was any tampering with the roll. At the same time there can be no doubt that in the process of the party quarrel two years ago grave doubts were cast upon it.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: As Lord Selborne's name has been brought into the question, is not the hon. Gentleman aware that Lord Selborne took a prominent part in the election in favour of one party, and notably in favour of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick?

COLONEL SEELY: No, Sir; I do not think that can at all be said.

French Customs Tariff.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has any official information as to whether it is possible in certain cases for the Government of France to effect changes in their Customs tariff by executive act, or should Parliamentary sanction be required or desired for such changes, as to whether it would be in accordance with precedent that a Bill effecting the changes in question might be passed through both the Chamber and the Senate in a single day.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. J. A. PEASE, Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative; and, as to the second part, my right hon. friend is not aware of any precedent for such action.

Tabriz.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British Consular authorities at Tabriz participated in any way in the recent pacification of that city through the agency of the Russian Consulate.

MR. J. A. PEASE: So far as my right hon. friend's information goes (it depends so far on telegrams only) His Majesty's Consul at Tabriz did not intervene in any way in the internal affairs of that city.

Shipping Claims against Russia.

Mr. G. H. FABER (Boston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs how the case of the German steamer "Petartos," for which the Russian Government paid full compensation early last year, differs from that of the British steamers "Hipsang," "Ikhona," and others, for which in no single instance has any compensation been obtained up to the present time.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: In the case of the "Tetartos" (not "Petartos") the Supreme Court of Appeal at St. Petersburg found that the steamer was not liable to confiscation, and that, as a consequence, the owners were entitled to compensation. The case of the "Hipsang" is still pending before the Court of Appeal. With regard to the "Ikhona," I would beg to refer to the Answer given to the hon. Member for Darlington on the 11th ultimo. The Supreme Court of Appeal found that the vessel was regularly detained, but should have been afterwards released, and that the appellants were entitled to recover compensation to the amount of the value of ship and cargo. The Supreme Court in its judgment not having gone into the question of amount, this has to be determined by the Port Court at Libau; who, it is understood, will consider the case in September next. The decision as regards the "Ikhona" is therefore substantially the same as in the case of the "Tetartos," though the proceedings have taken longer.

British Consuls in Continental Cities.

Mr. FERENS (Hull, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, with a view of more effectually fostering British trade and interests in Continental cities, His Majesty's Government will consider the desirability of appointing British subjects only as consuls in such cities.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: As the salaried Consular posts are filled exclusively by British subjects, the hon. Member no doubt refers to Consular posts to which no salary is assigned. Such posts must of necessity be filled by local residents. It is not always possible to find a suitable resident of British nationality willing to accept appointment, but it is only when no suitable British subject is available that the appointment is offered to a foreign subject; and foreign subjects are appointed only to ports where the importance of British trade is not sufficient to justify a request to Parliament to vote a salary for a Consular officer.

The Imprisoned Suffragists.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is yet in a position to reconsider his decision not to suggest to the magistrate that the ladies recently arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in the second division should be transferred to the first division.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): No, sir; I have nothing to add to my previous Answer.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman satisfied that these punishments do not go far beyond anything that has the sanction of public opinion?

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Has the right hon. Gentleman read the statement of Mr. Logan, a former Member of this House, in reference to the indignities inflicted on his own daughter in this case? Is he aware that this lady has not been permitted to have a communication with anyone, but has been kept in a solitary state for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four, and not allowed to read?

[No Answer was returned.]

Walthamstow Cruelty Case—Police Action.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Leslie Rubin, a boy of twelve, who was arrested at Walthamstow on or about 7th July by a constable for working a lame mare, with which he had been sent out by a contractor; whether he is aware that the boy was taken to the police station and there charged, although the constable could have proceeded by summons; and whether he will issue instructions to the Metropolitan Police not to apprehend youthful offenders for non-indictable offences if their names and addresses can be ascertained, except their apprehension is absolutely necessary.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have made inquiry and find that this was a bad case of cruelty. It was essential that the boy and horse should be detained in order that the horse might be examined by a veterinary surgeon, who directed that it should be produced before the justices. It is obvious that if proceedings in such cases were taken by summons the condition of the animal would materially change during the lapse of some days before the hearing, and the justices would be unable to form so sound a judgment respecting the charge. The boy was detained no longer than was necessary, and was not placed in dock or cell.

Betting Swindles.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the prosecution of a sub-postmaster in connection with certain betting swindles involving a firm carrying on its business in London and Flushing; whether the offices in the United Kingdom of such businesses in which money for betting is received at the foreign addresses have been declared to be betting houses under the Act of 1853; and if he proposes to take any steps to suppress such illegal businesses in this country.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My attention has not been called to the case of the sub-postmaster referred to, but in the recent case of one Robert Burrell it was held, under the Act of 1853, that though the money was received by his clerk at Flushing and thence remitted to Burrell's Bank at Plaistow, the business was transacted at 738, Barking Road, which was accordingly held to be a betting house. This decision is now being appealed against.

Pleasure Craft on the Thames.

Mr. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Droitwich Division of Worcestershire, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the number of rowing-boats, house-boats, launches, and other pleasure craft registered on the Thames between Teddington and Cricklade, and what is the number of registered owners of the same; and, having regard to the fact that the users of these craft provide about a quarter of the revenue of the Conservators, why no direct representation has been proposed to be given to such persons on the Board of Conservators which is to be brought into existence by the Port of London Bill.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I am informed by the Thames Conservancy that the number of house-boats, launches, and other pleasure craft registered on the Thames between Teddington and Cricklade is 13,520 and the number of registered owners is 6,375. The amount received in 1907 for registration fees and lock tolls was £8,523, being about 16 per cent. of the total revenue of the Conservators for that part of the river. I do not think that it would be practicable to provide direct representation for these owners of pleasure craft who are distributed over a very wide area, but I am proposing an Amendment of the Bill under which the Board of Trade will nominate two representatives specially selected to represent those who use the river as a place of recreation by boating or otherwise. This Amendment is very similar to an Amendment given notice of by the Thames Preservation League.

Upper Thames Conservancy Board.

Mr. CARR-GOMM: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Droitwich Division of Worcestershire, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the interest taken in the formation of a new Conservancy Board for the Upper Thames, and the many petitions against its proposed constitution, he will arrange for the publication of the petition of the Thames League as a Parliamentary Paper for the information of Members.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The petitions against the Port of London Bill have been referred by the House to the Joint Committee, and I have no power to deal with any of them in the manner proposed by my hon. friend. I do not know of any precedent for selecting one of many petitions for publication in the way suggested.

Patents and Designs Act, 1907.

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the

President of the Board of Trade if it is proposed to issue any papers dealing with representations made to the Board of Trade in respect of the working of the Patents and Designs Act, 1907.

MR. CHURCHILL: There is no present intention of issuing papers on this subject.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: When will there be such an intention?

MR. CHURCHILL: It depends on the accumulation of information of interest to the House.

Tinplate Duty.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the French Government proposes to increase the import duties upon tinplates from the United Kingdom.

MR. CHURCHILL: So far as I am aware the French Government have made no proposal for increasing the duty on tinplates. His Majesty's Embassy at Paris have been instructed to procure such information as may be available respecting the suggestions for tariff alterations which have been laid before the French Parliamentary Customs Commission for consideration. I believe that the French Parliamentary session will close to-day, so that there is no probability of an early change in the duty.

MR. JAMES HOPE: Assuming that the French Government make up their minds to increase these duties, can the right hon. Gentleman suggest any means of persuading them otherwise?

MR. CHURCHILL: I see no reason to assume such a hypothetical position, but it will be sufficient to deal with the evil when it arises.

Motor Speeds—Whitehall Fatality.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the recent death of a clerk in the Foreign Office, who was killed by a mechanically-propelled vehicle in Whitehall; and whether the Government will take immediate steps to restrict all vehicles on public highways to a speed which is reasonably consistent with the safety of the lives and limbs of His Majesty's subjects.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I have seen a newspaper report of the inquest in this case. I do not gather that the vehicle was driven at an excessive speed, but the jury appear to have considered that there was a certain amount of neligence on the part of the driver. I would point out to my hon. friend that if any person drives a motor car on a public highway recklessly or neligently, or at a speed or in a manner which is dangerous to the public, he renders himself liable to penalties under the existing law.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that last week a woman was dragged fifty yards by a motor car, and that the abuse of driving is continually going on all over the country; and will he consult with the Prime Minister and the Government as to whether they will not exclude the Motor Cars Act, 1903, from the Expiring Laws Continuance Act.

* MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should give notice of that Question.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): Is it not a fact that it is impossible for the Act of Parliament just quoted to be of any service in this matter, as it is not possible to prove what is dangerous to the public?

* MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question also.

Erith Distress Relief Works.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Erith Urban District Council obtained the sanction of the Local Government Board to carry out the improvement in the Lower Abbey Road with a view to relieving the distress in the neighbourhood, on the understanding that an advance would be made to the Distress Committee from the unemployed fund, and that the Board made two grants from the fund for this special purpose; and whether, seeing that the urban district council summarily suspended the work, although the amount of distress had not decreased, the Local Government Board will call upon the urban district council to proceed with the execution of the work.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware of the circumstances of this case. I understand that the urban district council stopped the work for the summer at the end of May on the ground that the balance of the money available for it should be reserved until next winter. I am not prepared to interfere with the decision of the urban district council in the matter; but, seeing that the work was undertaken with the object of relieving the distress from want of employment which existed at Erith in the early part of the year, I think it is to be regretted that greater progress was not made with the work during the past winter and spring.

Act 43 Eliz., c. 2—West Ham Guardians' Decision.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that Charles Robinson, an iron moulder, and Richard Bullen, a carpenter, applied to the West Ham guardians on the 12th June, 1908, to be put to work under the Act of 43 Eliz., c. 2, and that the West Ham guardians accepted their responsibility and liability by asking the Local Government Board for power to act: and, seeing it has been stated by former Presidents of the Local Government Board that it would not be illegal for the responsible authority to set men to work under the Act mentioned, which has never been repealed, whether it is the intention of the Local Government Board to grant the powers asked for, seeing that all the other sections of the Act have been in full force for many years past, so as to enable them to put the poor to work at reasonable wages; and, if such powers are granted, will he state on what date the guardians will be called upon to carry out the powers asked for.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have received an application from the guardians on this subject. I gather that it is made under the impression that the wages to be received for the work would not have the effect of constituting the recipients paupers. I have, however, no power to give any sanction or to make any regulations which would authorise the guardians to provide work for the applicants on any such terms. It appears to me, therefore, that the guardians should deal with the applications under the Regulations which now control the employment of paupers to whom relief is given by them. Those regulations do not enable the guardians to comply with such an application as that now before them.

Motor Speed Limit.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that many motorists habitually exceed the legal limit of speed, and openly boast that they have broken the laws of their country; and whether he will consider the possibility of requiring that every motor travelling upon the public highway shall have attached to it an apparatus, placed under seal, which will automatically shut off the engine and apply the brake as soon as the legal limit of speed is reached.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The question of the possibility of compelling motor cars to adopt a mechanical limitation of speed was considered by the Royal Commission on Motor Cars. In view of the engineering difficulties and the expense involved, and also of the possibility of any mechanical arrangement being tampered with, they did not recommend that such contrivances should be made compulsory. I regret to say that at present I do not see my way to adopt the suggestion of my hon. friend.

Dorking Motor Fatality.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the finding of the jury at an inquest held at Dorking, on 4th July, on the body of a cyclist killed by a motor car, to the effect that the under-carriages of motor cars were too near the ground; and whether, in the interests of public safety, he will take the point into consideration in any future legislation.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My hon. friend has sent me a report of the inquest in the case of this sad accident. I will take note of his suggestion, which is not altogether a new one, though I am not at present sanguine that it will be possible to adopt it.

*Mr. HAROLD COX: Can my right hon. friend give any estimate of how many more people must be killed before His Majesty's Government see their way to take action?

*Mr. JOHN BURNS: My hon. friend is unaware of the extent to which my right hon. friend the Home Secretary and myself, in conjunction with the local authorities throughout the country, have endeavoured to put a stop to reckless driving of motor cars, and I say this with all respect, that in the interests of the public I am rather afraid to approach the Houses of Parliament with a view to amending the Motor Car Act for fear that the maximum limit would be knocked out altogether.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether it would not be better to do away with the maximum speed limit than to continue the present farcical administration of the Act?

*Mr. JOHN BURNS: No; but my view is that if the local authorities and the magistrates rigorously enforced Section 1, any person, whatever the speed, might be fined and imprisoned in certain circumstances, and this would be better than any maximum limit I have yet heard suggested.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware——

*Mr. SPEAKER: This discussion should take place in Committee of Supply.

Motor Traffic and Road Maintenance.

Mr. KING (Cheshire, Knutsford): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the increased cost to various county councils during the last six years of maintaining the main roads, amounting in some cases to as much as 60 per cent.; to what extent does he attribute this increase to the development of motor traffic; and does he propose to introduce legislation to deal with this question, and also with the nuisance and danger to the public health arising from the dust raised by motor cars in dry weather.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I am aware that there has been a growth in the cost of maintaining main roads in recent years, but I cannot say to what extent this is attributable to the development of motor traffic. As I have intimated on previous occasions, no promise can be given to introduce legislation to deal with this question, or with the subject of motor traffic during the present session.

London County Council Tramway Accounts.

Sir JOHN BENN (Devonport): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been directed to the Report on the London County Council tramway accounts by Messrs. Peat and Pixley; and whether he proposes as a result thereof to instruct the Government auditor of the accounts of the London County Council, or any other local authority owning tramways, to amend their accounts in the direction indicated in the Report.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I have seen the Report referred to. I do not think it necessary to take any action thereon.

Parks Chair Contractor.

Mr. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the chair contractor in Hyde and Regent's Parks has entered into the usual guarantee with the Office of Works as to paying the ordinary trade union rate of wages to his employees; whether he is aware that children are employed by this contractor on this contract; and will the First Commissioner put a stop to their employment.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. L. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale): The inspectors are paid 5s. and the collectors 4s. per day. I am not aware that there is a trade union of "chairmen." Children are employed solely to sell programmes of the band music, and I think it would be a pity to discourage their employment for this purpose.

Royal Courts of Justice.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of

Works if he will state how many times a week during the last month the temporary courts at the Law Courts have been used; whether he can say what will be the ultimate cost of the new buildings when completed; and whether he has satisfied himself that the new Courts are absolutely necessary.

MR. L. HARCOURT: Owing to the Judges being absent on circuit and from other causes these Courts have not been used during the last month except by the senior Master in Chancery for hearings. The new Courts are estimated to cost £95,000. The reply to the last paragraph is in the affirmative.

Unemployment in the London Building Trade.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can see his way to put in hand all the building work that has been sanctioned, with all the speed possible, in consequence of the thousands of men who are out of employment in the various sections of the building trade in London.

MR. L. HARCOURT: I am quite as much interested as the hon. Member in pushing on building work for the current year: everything is being put in hand as speedily as circumstances permit.

American Gooseberry Mildew.

MR. ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the total number of outbreaks of American gooseberry mildew which have been investigated by the Board of Agriculture under the Destructive Insects and Pests Act up to April last; the number of cases where the mildew has reappeared this summer in the affected plantations in the infectious summer stage; and whether in these cases, the plantations in question had been certified by the Board's inspector as being properly pruned according to the requirements of the Board's order.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY Somersetshire, S.): 706 outbreaks of American gooseberry mildew were investigated by the Board's inspectors up to the end of April last. 131 cases in the summer stage have been reported. The inspectors report to the Board in every case that all visible disease has been removed by pruning, but inasmuch as they cannot always be present when the pruning is carried out they do not certify that it has been carried out in accordance with the Order.

Sheep Dipping Regulations.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether in view of the difficulties of gathering sheep over extensive mountain tracts, the Board of Agriculture will consider the propriety of allowing one dipping to suffice in such localities; and whether steps have been taken for the wide publication in Welsh of the orders of the Board of Agriculture in this behalf.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Sheep scab is especially prevalent in the mountain districts in Wales, and inasmuch as rigorous measures for its eradication are more necessary in those districts than elsewhere the Board are unable to adopt my hon. friend's suggestion. The Orders on the subject have so far as the Board are aware been published in accordance with the provisions of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, but their publication in Welsh rests with the local authorities and the Board have no power to require it.

MR. REES: Will the right hon. Gentleman bring pressure to bear on the local authorities to see that it is done?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: We have no power to enforce it, but I am quite ready to bring the suggestion of hon. Members before the local authorities.

Civil Service.—Assistant Clerks' Pay.

MR. ALDEN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Treasury have recently circulated in the various Government departments a scheme in which it is proposed to pay assistant clerks of twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, and in the ninth year of permanent service, a salary of £85 per annum; whether the majority of the men will be employed in London; if so, whether their Lordships consider this a living wage for this class of Civil servant; and whether they are prepared to modify the scheme as regards men of this age.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I may point out that the salary in the suggested scale, at the age mentioned, is £5 better than the salary on the present scale at the same age, assuming that assistant clerks now enter at an average of twenty; and the difference in favour of the suggested scale is still greater in the next succeeding years. No doubt the majority of assistant clerks are employed in London, but I cannot propose any modification of the scheme as suggested.

Old-Age Pensions—Regulations.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the regulations to be prepared to carry out the provisions of the Old-age Pensions Bill will be laid upon the Table at an early date, so that if the Bill should be amended by the House of Lords there be will an opportunity of considering the whole proposals of the Government before they are finally dealt with.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The Regulations cannot, of course, be finally settled until the Bill has become law. When that has happened, they will be completed and laid on the Table with as little delay as possible. But, until the Bill has received the Royal Assent, I am not in a position to pledge myself to a precise date.

Old-Age Pensions—Provision of Funds.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state from what source the money will be provided to pay the pensions under the Old-Age Pensions Bill between the end of March, 1909, and the date when further funds will be available under the Finance Bill of 1909.

MR. HOBHOUSE: In ordinary course an Estimate of the sum required for old-age pensions in 1909–10 will be presented to this House early next session. A Vote on Account will be taken before the 31st March, 1909, sanctioning expenditure under that Estimate from the 1st April up to the probable date of the passing of the Appropriation Bill. A Consolidated Fund Bill will be passed, also before the 31st March, giving power to make issues from the Consolidated Fund to defray the expenditure included in the Vote on Account. Any measures that may be necessary in regard to the revenue of the Consolidated Fund in that year will be dealt with in the Budget.

London Tramways and Income-Tax.

SIR JOHN BENN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount paid to date as income-tax on the profits of the London County Council tramways; and whether, in view of the recent audit by Messrs. Peat and Pixley of the tramways accounts of that body, he proposes to return all or part of the income-tax.

MR. HOBHOUSE: It would be contrary to the express provisions of the Income-Tax Acts to furnish information in regard to any particular assessment.

SIR JOHN BENN: Does the hon. Gentleman propose to return, in consequence of this audit, any money that has been paid in regard to the tramway profits of the London County Council?

MR. HOBHOUSE: No, sir. I do not think the Exchequer proposes to return any money.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: It has no conscience, and, therefore, never pays "conscience money."

Squatters on Sandray Island.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has any information to show that within the past few days a number of squatters have seized land on the island of Sandray; and, if so, what steps His Majesty's Government propose to take in the matter.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I am informed by the Chief Constable of Inverness-shire that three squatters are living in huts at Sandray engaged in lobster fishing, but this began, so I understand, before the last few days. They have small patches of potatoes and some stock there, but they have not removed their families from Mingulay.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Has the right hon. Gentleman information that not later than this morning ten more squatters landed on this island? Will he inquire, and if this be the case, what action will he take?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: I will inquire.

Scottish Estimates Debates.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will grant the Return on Scottish Estimates (Debates).

[Mr. Pirie—Scottish Estimates (Debates)—Return showing the last dates on which the Votes were passed, after discussion in this House, in the case of each of the following Scottish Votes:—Lunacy Commission, Registrar-General's Office, Register House, Prisons Commission, National Galleries Board, Crofters Commission, Congested Districts Boards, Law Charges and Courts of Law, Public Education, Scotland, and the number of days given to the actual discussion of Scottish Estimates during each of the last ten years, and the annual average number of parliamentary days during the last twenty years.]

Mr. SINCLAIR: I regret that I am unable to consent to this Return for the reasons given to my hon. friend on 8th July.

Mr. PIRIE: May I ask from what source this information is obtainable?

Mr. SINCLAIR: From the Journals of the House, from reports of our debates, and from *Hansard.*

Mr. PIRIE: Who is responsible for refusing this Return?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I suppose I am.

Mr. PIRIE: Are we to understand that the right hon. Gentleman is more anxious to withhold information required by the people of Scotland than to give information which will show the neglect of Scottish business by this House?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to make statements of that nature under cover of a Question.

Irish Criminal Statistics.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he consents to the Returns under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, of which notice appears on to-day's Paper.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.): Yes, Sir.

Navigation Works (Ireland) Bill.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Navigation Works (Ireland Bill), introduced by the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), has been withdrawn; if he can state why this course has been taken and at whose instance; and if it is intended to drop all legislation on this subject during the present session; and, if so, why.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am aware that the Navigation Works (Ireland) Bill has been withdrawn. The decision to withdraw it was the act of the Government. I do not think it necessary or desirable to enter into the reasons which prompted that decision, but I may inform the hon. gentleman that the Government are considering the question of introducing a measure in substitution of the former Bill.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Is it not a fact that the Navigation Works Bill was introduced by one Irish Department—the Department of Agriculture, and then withdrawn in consequence of the opposition of another Department—the Board of Works represented by the Treasury?

Mr. BIRRELL: These internecine disputes are hardly fit subjects to be referred to in public.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Are we to have these matters neglected because of these internecine disputes between English boards?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. MOONEY (Newry): Is it not a fact that the Irish Government decided last year that it was necessary to have such a Bill, and that a Bill was brought in by the Department of Agriculture and blocked by the Board of Works, and that the same procedure has been adopted this year ?

Mr. BIRRELL: The hon. Member seems to be well aware of all that has happened, and I need not add anything.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Was not one of the objects in introducing this Bill to give Irish county councils the power of contributing—which they do not at present possess—to the erection of piers and public works in Ireland, and I should like to ask whether from the lack of that power some useful public works, such as piers, which are much needed by the fishermen, have not been erected; whether in view of the pressing need of these works being carried out, for which money has been provided, he will not see that the next Bill is pushed through, and whether the Prime Minister——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now asking four supplementary Questions. He had better put them down.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Having regard to the importance of this matter may I ask the Chief Secretary or whoever replies for the Government whether he will not take steps to proceed with the measure ?

Mr. BIRRELL: I have already said they are considering the question and are quite prepared to introduce a measure in substitution for the former Bill, which will have the effect of carrying out the very admirable reforms suggested by the hon. Member for Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I only desire to ask one Question. Is it not a fact that the pier has been designed to be erected on the coast of Clare, costing a certain sum of money, that the money has been provided, that it is there, but the work cannot be carried out because of the lack of power on the part of the county council which this Bill is to confer, and whether——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member said he wished to ask one Question. He is now asking five.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: It was only the second part of the first.

Expenditure on Irish Purposes.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give a detailed list of the items which go to make up the amount of the total expenditure out of the Exchequer or out of the taxes raised by the authority of Parliament upon purely Irish purposes in the year 1898–99.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The hon. Member will find the details of this expenditure in the Financial Relations Return for 1898–99 (House of Commons Paper No. 317 of 1899, pages 12 to 18).

Limerick Postmastership.

Mr. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General under what circumstances the postmaster at Limerick has been appointed to his present office; whether he is aware that since this official took up duty at Limerick he has been continually finding fault with the general staff and their performance of duties; and whether, seeing that such attitude may again lead to the selection of officials from other offices to fill supervising posts at Limerick when vacant, he will take the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of Limerick officials, and check the annoyance to which they are being subjected.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The present postmaster of Limerick was appointed on 17th September last because I considered him best qualified among the various applicants for the vacant post. I have no doubt that he performs his duties at Limerick with the same ability and fairness which led me to select him, and I strongly deprecate attacks such as are contained in this Question.

Mr. JOYCE: Is it not the case that the present staff carried on the duties capably and well under the late postmaster? Will the right hon. Gentleman see that the regulations are in future administered in a less vexatious spirit ?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the staff complain to me I will inquire, but I object to general accusations of this sort. They must be put in a specific form.

Mr. JOYCE: I want the complaints of those I represent ventilated in this House.

The Autumn Session.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the strain that will be imposed upon members by the prolongation of the sitting of the House through the autumn, he will consider the desirability of reducing the sitting on Wednesdays to a half-day, say from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): Personally I should be glad to see some arrangement come to by which in the autumn sittings, when the Committee work upstairs is less exacting, the House might avoid sitting on the evening of Wednesdays. But in that case I think the day sitting would have to begin rather earlier than my hon. friend suggests. No change of the kind can be proposed unless it is clear that it will meet with general assent and be agreed to without discussion.

Case of Dr. Hall Edwards.

Mr. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the case of Dr. Hall Edwards who, although he had lost one hand through his experiments with the X-rays for the relief of suffering humanity, has been compelled to abandon his work in order that he may have his other hand amputated; and whether he can see his way clear to recommend a larger sum than the grant of £120 per annum which has been made to him.

Mr. ASQUITH: I have received no information to lead me to believe that Dr. Hall Edwards is in pecuniary need, or that any steps have been taken at the instigation or wish either of himself or of his friends who brought his case to the notice of the late Prime Minister, with a view to an increase being made in the pension awarded to him last year, which was considerably above the average amount usually granted from the Civil List. In these circumstance I think it undesirable to express an opinion as to what the decision would be if an application as suggested in the hon. Member's Question were duly put forward. The total amount of the pensions awardable each year is limited to £1,200, and there are many applicants for them with both legitimate and pressing claims.

Ancient Buildings and Monuments.

Mr. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that he has promised to appoint a Royal Commission to report on the preservation of ancient buildings and monuments in Wales such as is already appointed for Scotland, he can now state whether he will also appoint one for England, the need of which has been pointed out to him in communications from the Royal Academy, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Institution of British Architects, and other societies.

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir. It is the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to report on the preservation of ancient monuments in England.

Lord BALCARRES asked if a conference could be arranged between the three Commissions for England, Wales, and Scotland so that an agreement might be arrived at in regard to the uniformity of classification, scheduling, etc.

Mr. ASQUITH: I think it is very desirable there should be such a conference, and I will see that the noble Lord's suggestion is considered.

Moray Firth.

Mr. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he can now state whether the Cabinet have yet concluded their consideration of the Moray Firth question; and if he can fix a date before the adjournment of the House on which their decision will be announced.

Mr. ASQUITH: I consider it very doubtful whether the Government Departments which are now considering this complicated question will have been able to arrive at a decision before the House adjourns.

Mr. WILLIAMSON: Has the attention of the right hon. Gentleman been directed to the gravity of the position and the great dissatisfaction caused by the delay?

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir.

MR. PIRIE: In considering this question will the paramount importance of prohibiting the landing at English ports of trawl caught fish from the Moray Firth be borne in mind?

MR. ASQUITH: All these points have been or are being considered.

MR. PIRIE: But was not such a prohibition the best means of solving the difficulty?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot decide as to the relative merits of the different proposals.

The Treasury Vote.

*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in future arrangement of business of Supply in other sessions, he will bear in mind the concurrence of the two chief parties in the State in the wisdom of giving the House of Commons the opportunity of occasionally discussing Item E of the Treasury Vote, created expressly for that purpose.

MR. ASQUITH: It is, no doubt, desirable that such an opportunity should, from time to time, be afforded. My right hon. friend will remember that during the present session the Government gave a day for the discussion of Naval and Military Expenditure.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS BILL.

Reported from Standing Committee A.

Leave to the Committee to make a Special Report.

Special Report brought up, and read.

Report and Special Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 226.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 226.]

NEW BILLS.

SALMON, TROUT, AND RIVER TWEED FISHERIES BILL.

"To consolidate and amend the Acts for more effectual preservation and increase of Salmon and Trout, and for regulating and improving the Fisheries in the River Tweed and the rivers and streams running into the same, and also within the entrance or mouth of the said river; and for other purposes," presented by Sir John Jardine; supported by Mr. Barnes, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Mr. Menzies, Mr. Molteno, Captain Murray, Mr. Charles Price, Mr. Tennant, and Mr. Eugene Wason; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 314.]

NAVAL MARRIAGES BILL.

"To authorise, for the purpose of Marriages in the United Kingdom, the publication of banns and the issue of certificates on board His Majesty's ships in certain cases," presented by Mr. McKenna; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 315.]

SUPPLY [16TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

NAVY ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,936,200, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expenses for the *personnel* for shipbuilding, repairs, maintenance, etc., including the cost of establishments of dockyards and naval yards at home and abroad which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1905."

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) said he was sorry the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord apparently did not propose to follow the usual course of making a statement on the introduction of this Vote, a practice which he thought was followed invariably by the previous senior representative of the Admiralty in this House during the time of the present Government, and one which indeed the right hon. Gentleman led them to believe would be followed in the present instance, because he purposely deferred giving them the information which they desired with regard to the shipbuilding programme of the Government, saying that a more suitable opportunity would be given on the Shipbuilding Vote. He was no doubt aware that the information which had been laid before the House with regard to this year's programme was of an exceedingly meagre character. They did not know, for example, what the second large armoured vessel was to be, and whilst he did not wish to press the right hon. Gentleman for any information which could not be properly given with due regard to the public interest, he thought it would be a great help to the Committee to have a short statement as to what the Government proposed in the way of this year's shipbuilding. That situation was somewhat aggravated by the fact that the Return of ships built and building was not yet in their hands, and consequently, they really had no information whatever with regard to this Vote, carrying a sum of £12,000,000 or £14,000,000, except what was contained very briefly in the explanatory statement of the First Lord at the commencement of the session. The right hon. Gentleman probably had some good reason for the course he had pursued, and he hoped he would give them as much information as he reasonably could. This discussion was an annual occasion of considerable importance, not merely because they gave a formal ratification at the end of it to the shipbuilding programme outlined by the Government at the commencement of the session, but because it gave to the House their only opportunity of considering how the adequacy or inadequacy of the shipbuilding programme which was submitted to the House some six months before affected the shipbuilding necessities of the immediate future. Our system of dealing with this question of shipbuilding programmes was curious and, he thought, in many ways unfortunate. The Government prepared and decided upon a shipbuilding programme somewhere in the month of November or December; it was outlined in the House of Commons about the month of March following; it was not discussed by the House or sanctioned until probably towards the end of the following July; in most cases it was not commenced until quite the end of the year, or, as had been recently the case, until early in the following year. That was to say, there was a delay of something like fifteen months from the time the programme was decided upon to the time the Government proceeded to put it into execution. That was a serious disadvantage to us as compared with the practice of our foreign rivals. Let them take the case of Germany, for example. In Germany the shipbuilding programme was voted as a rule in March or April, and building was actually commenced in June or July, and the result was that in any given year's programme we were necessarily left at least six months behind the Germans, and that start which we thus gave to our rivals neutralised entirely, as he thought, any possible and by no means certain advantage we were supposed to enjoy as a result of our superior speed in shipbuilding. He was not convinced that we did build as a common practice our ships any quicker than the Germans were able to build theirs, but that was a matter into which he did not wish to go further on that occasion. He made these preliminary observations in the hope that the Government might consider the advisability of altering the method of procedure, which placed us at a great disadvantage, which had nothing to commend it, and which indeed made it extremely difficult for anyone to calculate what our actual position was in regard to naval strength as compared with that of any other naval power. The programme which was laid down at the commencement of the session was indeed, as it was described by the First Lord, exceedingly modest. He did not think anyone, even the most ardent advocates of the peace policy, could accuse us of forcing the pace in the matter of construction as compared with foreign countries. He would endeavour to show that the programme which had been suggested was inadequate, and that it was quite indefensible from the point of view of the enormous financial burdens that it threw upon succeeding years. Most Members of the Committee knew what the programme was, that there was one battleship, one large armoured cruiser, about which they had no information whatever, six other fast protected cruisers, sixteen destroyers, and £500,000 worth of submarines, but even that meagre programme was not taken seriously in hand so far as the finance was concerned. Practically the whole of the expenditure was postponed from the present to the succeeding financial year, and to all intents and purposes the very small programme was not the programme for 1908–9, but for 1909–10. The Admirality indeed went so far as to boast of the fact that the sum taken for new constructions was the smallest since the year 1899, and that it marked a further step in the continuous fall of expenditure under that head. He did not think there was anything particular to boast of in that connection, and he did not believe there was any advantage in it except a mere temporary Treasury advantage, and certainly a programme which was made up largely if not entirely of deferred expenditure was not one which even a financier need have any reason to boast of, particularly when they considered that the corresponding expenditure on shipbuilding by foreign Powers during the period covered by the Government's proposals was steadily, and even sensationally, rising. It was always an invidious task to inquire too closely into the programme of other countries with which we were on friendly terms, but they were obliged to do so on that occasion, and he must point out that the German Naval Estimates, which had increased by over £3,000,000 since last year, had, under this particular head of shipbuilding, increased by £750,000 over last year, and last year they increased by £500,000 over the year before. The German Naval Estimates had increased over 500 per cent in the last sixteen years, and under the new Navy Bill the German Naval expenditure was £14,000,000 last year, £17,000,000 this year, and would be £20,000,000 in 1909, £22,000,000 in 1910, and £23,000,000 in 1911. That did not include works, and of course the sum was further reduced by the existence of conscription with the German Navy. These facts must all be taken into account. At any rate, they were face to face with the fact that under the Navy Bill, approved by the German Reichstag, an expenditure of £208,000,000 between now and 1917 had been approved by the Parliament of that country. The distinguishing feature of that programme and that expenditure, which, he might say, had never been reduced, whatever modifications there might be made in German programmes, was that that expenditure and those programmes showed a steady, continuous, and relentless policy which made our spasmodic hand-to-mouth method of dealing with these matters appear to very great disadvantage. The facts which he had ventured to outline must give them reason "furiously to think" as our French friends said; it had passed from the stage of academic speculation, and we were face to face with the question as to how we stood as regarded the immediate future as compared with our chief rivals. The last discussion they had on this subject was on 10th March, and that debate was distinguished by a most momentous statement by the Prime Minister. The statement was so important that he ventured to remind the Committee of the particular passage. The Prime Minister said—

> "I will say this, without the faintest hesitation, that if we find there is a probability, or a reasonable probability, of the German programme being carried out in the way the paper figures suggest, we should deem it our duty to provide, and we should provide, not only for a sufficient number of ships, but for such a date for laying down those ships that at the end of 1911 the superiority of Germany, which the right hon. Gentleman foreshadowed, would not be an actual fact. I hope that is quite explicit. That is the policy of His Majesty's Government. It remains on record, and I think it ought to reassure the House that we do not intend in this matter to be left behind."

With regard to the statement of the Prime Minister, he would only make this observation, namely, that the date which the right hon. Gentleman mentioned was necessarily, in view of what would be brought before them at the end of 1911, not really a period of extreme significance. As a matter of fact he believed—and it was universally believed—that the period of extreme significance, as far as we were concerned, was not the end of 1911, but the early part of 1912. Whilst that period might seem somewhat remote, it was not really so, because under our system the ships under the shipbuilding programme which the Government had to decide in the next few months, would not be ready until the early part of 1912. How should we stand at that date, which he described as the really critical date? He admitted to the full the view that the superiority of our ships of the first-class was absolutely assured in the meantime as against any rival. But as regarded the new type of ship, and assuming for the moment, not knowing what the Government's intentions were, that we should have no other ships except those which were already approved by the House of Commons, our position at that date would be as to capital ships, that we should have twelve ships of the "Dreadnought" or "Invincible" classes at the end of 1911. Germany had at the present moment, according to the best information he could obtain, nine ships of those classes building, and she would have thirteen completed by the end of 1911. They would have also, if the present indications were fulfilled, other four, making seventeen in all completed by 1912. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head. The right hon. Gentleman might have further information; if so, he would give the House the benefit of it. His own information was derived from a German paper which was universally recognised as a most authoritative source of information on these matters. He was assuming in regard to the programme an equal speed in shipbuilding; he knew of no reason why they had any right to assume anything else. The First Lord of the Admiralty had claimed publicly that the Germans were able to build as quickly, if not more so, than were we. While it might perhaps be said that Germany at the present time was three months behind in her programme, yet we also were behind in our programme in respect of the "Invincible" cruisers promised to the country to be ready for service by May, 1908. They were not ready yet. One was nearly ready.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): One is quite ready.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: One was quite ready, and the other two were not, and at any rate this was not May, 1908. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary, if these figures were correct—and he believed them to be correct—that next year's programme of capital ships should be at least five vessels of the "Dreadnought" or "Invincible" class, if we were to equal the position which Germany would hold in the year 1912, in regard to these classes of ships. Then, assuming that we followed our present dilatory methods of laying down ships on which we had decided—the Prime Minister, in his statement to which he had referred, hinted at an earlier laying down of ships in case of necessity. He hoped that that hint might be translated into reality. He believed that a change of that kind was sound from both a business and a financial point of view, and would relieve the present situation. The Prime Minister's statement really only insisted upon equality with Germany, and that was the reason why he himself had never thought it so overwhelmingly satisfactory, because it actually only provided for the one-Power standard as regarded these vessels. Of course, the one-Power standard in this matter was not only disastrously, but ludicrously, inadequate. His personal belief was that the two-Power standard was best translated as the twice one-Power standard, and that the only really safe course for us was to lay down, or what was more important, to complete for service, two capital ships for every one that our chief naval rival might be possessed of, at any given time. Anyhow, in order to keep the pledge which the Prime Minister had given last March, it was quite clear that the Government must embark upon a large programme of capital shipbuilding during the coming year, and that programme was to be decided within the next few months. They perhaps could not go further into the future now, but he thought it was necessary, or at any rate desirable, to remind the House and the country of what was before them, and what was their position at the present moment. The responsibility of framing the programme, and still more, the responsibility for finding the money to do it, devolved upon the Government and upon the Government alone. They had every reason to suppose that after the Prime Minister's speech they would rise to that responsibility, and if they did, they might rest assured of support not only from the Opposition Benches but from the whole country. If the Government did not rise to that responsibility, he believed that the country would make it overwhelmingly plain—indeed, they had done that during the past week—that whatever else they might put up with there was one thing they would not stand, and that was any trifling with the Navy. He would not go into technical details about the ships on the new programme, particularly in view of the fact that they had been vouchsafed no details by the Government. These Votes were not only extremely technical and complicated, but they were the occasion of continual wrangling and disputes among the experts, and when experts "raged furiously together," there was not much chance, he thought, of the House of Commons being able to come to a conclusion. Expert critics like Sir William White, the ex-chief constructor of the Navy, who attacked the new type of vessels for many divers and inconsistent reasons, did not help them very much to arrive at a conclusion. Those critics said that the "Dreadnought" type was bad and inferior as a fighting machine to the ships which they themselves had designed. They compared the increased speed, the increased armament, the increased cost, and all the other characteristic features, and yet in the same breath those critics chided the Admiralty for having introduced a type which was inferior to the previously existing type, and for having wantonly sacrificed the immense advantage which we possessed in the older class of vessels. These two arguments were mutually destructive, but however that might be, he did not wish on that occasion to plunge into this highly technical controversy as to the "Dreadnought" versus the "King Edward," or any of those other technicalities. What he wished to say was that the new type of "Dreadnought" was absolutely inevitable as the result of the Russo-Japanese War. We had not invented it; we had not originated it. If he might use the language of the Stud book it was the "joint parentage" of Colonel Cuniberti the great Italian expert, and the Russo Japanese War. However that might be, both the Russians and the Japanese had decided to build large ships of this type before we designed the "Dreadnought," and we were face to face with the question whether we would follow suit or run the risk of the British Navy dropping behind in this most vital matter. The Board of Admiralty who were responsible for the introduction of this type only arrived at the design after the most careful deliberation by an expert Committee, which had upon it not only the First Lord, but the Director of Naval Construction, the Chief Engineer, two sea-going captains, and six experts, including Lord Kelvin, Professor Byles, and Sir John Thornycroft. From their most careful investigations was evolved this type, and he thought the designs they produced were at least as worthy of consideration as any of the views expressed by Sir William White. At any rate the "Dreadnought" type had been adopted by every first class naval Power, and was it really suggested by the critics that we should abandon it—that we should be content to build slower, smaller, and less armoured ships than other countries simply in order to please expert critics like Sir William White, who, as was not unnatural in the fond parent, hugged the belief that his own offspring must necessarily be unsurpassed? As the motor cabs superseded the older class of vehicles, so in time no doubt the "Dreadnought" type would be surpassed and discredited by other and later ideas. That was the universal experience in naval progress. In the meantime was it possible that they should allow the British Navy to run the risk of falling behind our foreign rivals as regarded ships of the "Dreadnought" class? The only other point he wished to go into had reference to torpedo craft. Discussion did not seem to lead to any satisfactory conclusion in view of the impossibility of getting at what the facts really were. At one time the Government had accepted the rule by which the life of a torpedo boat was put at eleven to twelve years. At another time when the standard was inconvenient they repudiated it. At one time they told them that the coastal class were sea-going destroyers, at another time that they were not destroyers at all but torpedo boats and very properly entered them as such in their official returns. These, of course, were Parliamentary manœuvres as far as these ships were concerned. It was practically certain, and it was endorsed by practically every naval officer who had had command of these vessels, that practically the whole of our destroyers, previous to what was known as the "River" class, were now worn out and were incapable of continuous service under war conditions. That fact was plainly hinted at in the statement of the First Lord at the beginning of the session. Although we had a very imposing strength on paper of vessels of this class, amounting to 166 destroyers, built or building, and 16 projected, he believed not more than 50 per cent. of those built at the outside were really capable of continuous war service under the sort of conditions that they would have to follow, say, in the North Sea. Concurrently with this they knew that the Germans had eighty-four modern boats built or building, and what was more important, they were laying down a complete division of twelve boats of this class every year and their Bill provided for doing so every year from 1906 to 1917. Here again they saw that regular relentless policy of shipbuilding which contrasted so favourably from the naval point of view with the spasmodic policy which we followed. He did not wish to make any party points at all. In past years we had apparently had no settled policy in regard to the building of destroyers. In 1903 fifteen were laid down; in 1904, none; in 1905, five; in 1906, three; in 1907, five; and this year it was proposed to lay down sixteen. As far as they could judge, comparing our standing with foreign countries we should be obliged to lay down at least twenty-five in the coming year if we were going to maintain anything like the reasonable superiority that was required. He did not think it was necessary to point out the financial and business evils which resulted from this irregular and haphazard method of construction. It imposed a sudden and almost intolerable strain upon the finances of a future year or else, as was more likely to be the case, it led to the neglect and postponement of shipbuilding which was absolutely necessary for the safety of the nation. This destroyer question he believed to be one of the most serious that the Admiralty had to face. He did not see how it could be faced or dealt with adequately without the production of a Supplementary Estimate during the present financial year. At any rate it was a most urgent matter. We had to have these vessels and he hoped the First Lord would inform the Committee what was the intention of the Government with regard to this important matter and to give them some assurance which would relieve the very grave anxiety that existed on the point. There was another point on which he wished to say a word. There were at present building in private yards in this country three vessels of the improved "Dreadnought" class for Brazil. Why Brazil should need three leviathans at this juncture it was difficult to imagine. Past experience showed that, whereas Brazil had had many ships built in this country, very few of them remained in her Navy to-day. Brazil was rather a speculator in warships, and if she had found that profitable in the past there was no reason to suppose she would not repeat the process in future. A sudden and unexpected addition of three "Dreadnoughts" to the fighting strength of any first-class naval Power would completely upset the balance upon which our shipbuilding programmes were constructed. That was a somewhat dangerous contingency which we could not neglect. It would be a profitless speculation to suggest what the ultimate destination of those ships would be, but he hoped the Government were watching the matter very closely, and that steps would be taken not only by the Admiralty, but by the Foreign Office to see that those ships would not fall into the hands of any Power less friendly and more formidable than the great South American Republic, with which we were, and, he hoped, always would be, on the best possible terms. He hoped he had made it clear that he was particularly anxious to avoid anything like party considerations, but he did not consider the Government shipbuilding programme to be adequate in any way to the needs of the Empire and still less to the necessities of the future. But after all there were some on both sides of politics who believed in a stronger Navy and who held this view just as strongly as he did. As far as these naval questions were concerned he would be glad to join hands with any one on either side, in or out of politics, who would do the right thing for the Navy, and he hoped they might count the new First Lord one of the number. He had a difficult, and, in some respects, a very delicate task before him. He believed the *materiel* of the Navy to be excellent and unsurpassed as far as it went. He believed that the *personnel* also was excellent and unsurpassable, and altogether, as regarded ships, equipment, officers, men, training, he believed that the Navy led where it had always led. There was nothing wrong with the Navy as a whole, and the country, he believed, had the utmost confidence in its zeal, spirit, and capacity. There was only one point on which at present there was any anxiety. He would not discuss that now, even if it were in order to do so. But he hoped he might express the confidence which he was sure they all felt that the Government were fully alive to this serious matter, that they could be relied upon to handle it with tact, impartiality, and above all with firmness. In whatever action they might find it necessary to take, in the interests both of the British Navy and of the nation, they were assured in advance of the support not only of all political parties, but of every one who cared, and cared deeply, for the reputation of the finest service in the world.

Mr. McKENNA, who was indistinctly heard, assured the hon. Gentleman that, notwithstanding the inadequate material of which he complained, he had managed to make a most excellent statement. He admitted that in one respect the material was not as full as the hon. Gentleman was entitled to receive; that was due to the return which stood in the name of his hon. friend having been unfortunately delayed, but he had not materially suffered from that circumstance, as the whole drift of his argument was not affected by any particulars contained in that return. The hon. Gentleman had complained that our system gave Germany an advantage in the fact that our shipbuilding programme was considered in November or December, and was stated to the House in the following March, and the programme was not begun to be laid down until probably some time in July or after.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE said it was brought before the House of Commons for discussion in July, and not laid down till the end of the year or more often, as in the present year, until March of the following year.

Mr. McKENNA said that that was true as to some ships, but not as to all. Some ships were laid down earlier than was stated by the hon. Member. If one looked at the German figures, he would find that the German programme of 1906 was not laid down in regard to the large ships until, in one case, March, 1907, and in the other, August, 1907. It so happened that the German programme of 1906 was actually laid down after the programme of 1907. In the German programme of 1904–5, when the hon. Gentleman himself was at the Admiralty, a considerable number of ships were not laid down in that year at all, and the principal ships were not laid down until 1st April, 1905. It was almost impossible to avoid some delay in laying down ships after the programme had been completed. If the hon. Member could offer any suggestion by which the laying down could be more approximated to the initiation of the programme the Board would be only too willing to consider it. The hon. Gentleman's principal complaint was that the Government programme for the year was too meagre, and in order to emphasise his observations he referred to the "continuous relentless policy" of Germany in building large ships. The Committee ought not to be in any uneasiness on that subject. At the present moment in Germany five large ships of the "Dreadnought" or "Invincible" type had been laid down, one of them as recently as March this year, and four others in March, June, July, and August, 1907. This country, on the other hand, had ten very nearly complete. One, the "Dreadnought," was completed long ago; the second, the "Indomitable," would accompany the Prince of Wales to Canada; and the third, the "Inflexible," was very nearly finished, and it was hoped the "Bellerophon" would be completed in October or November this year; in fact, the whole of the ten ought to be completed before the German five were finished. Then the hon. Member went on to refer to the danger which would occur in 1911 and 1912. In the middle of 1911 we should still have a marked superiority over Germany in this particular type of ship. In that year we should have eight "Dreadnoughts" and four cruisers, while Germany—even if she completed her programme in the shortest time named by herself, as to which present experience did not justify too sanguine hopes on Germany's part—would have seven "Dreadnoughts" and two "Inflexibles," thus giving us a superiority of three vessels in that type.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): The right hon. Gentleman takes the figures for the middle of the year 1911, but when the Prime Minister dealt with this subject on 10th March he pointed out that if you took the figures at the end of the year they would be Germany thirteen, as against our eleven.

MR. McKENNA rather thought it was the Leader of the Opposition and not the Prime Minister who stated that. The Leader of the Opposition assumed that at the end of 1911 Germany would have completed not only this year's programme, but also her next year's programme as well, and in consequence would have at the end of 1911 a total of thirteen, whereas we, upon this year's programme, would have only twelve. In that statement it was assumed that Germany would have completed her next year's programme, whereas we should not have completed our next year's programme, although nobody, he thought, would suggest that Germany could build faster than we could.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): But the point is that Germany begins her shipbuilding every year much sooner than we do, and, if that practice were carried out next year, then the dangerous state of things would come about to which reference was made. The Prime Minister, in reply to me, said that, if that seemed to be likely to be the case, we would begin our shipbuilding programme earlier next year.

MR. McKENNA said that, although our shipbuilding programme was initiated in the month of November or December, and was not discussed in that House until the following July, the practice being not to lay down the ships until the latter end of the year, yet the Admiralty were perfectly capable of laying down boats at any time of the year. The interruption of the Leader of the Opposition had no reference to this year's Estimates. After 1st April, 1909, however, it would be a perfectly proper observation that if we were to keep pace with the German programme, we must build a certain number of ships in 1909–1910 and lay them down at an earlier period of the year. But in answer to the statement as regarded this year's Estimates, all we had to do was to assume that Germany could build no faster than we could and to make sure on this year's programme, which would be completed in the middle of 1911, that we should have at that time a superiority over Germany.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: The right hon. Gentleman says at that rate we shall have twelve as compared with Germany's nine. Does he state on behalf of the Admiralty that he considers that a sufficient margin of superiority?

MR. McKENNA said the hon. Gentleman asked whether he considered that was a sufficient margin of superiority over Germany in this kind of ship. The hon. Gentleman had laid it down that a desirable interpretation of the two-Power standard would be twice any one Power. But that was an extension of the doctrine of the two-Power standard, and a very serious extension. What the hon. Gentleman meant was not only twice any one Power in any type of ship but twice any one Power in every type of ship. According to him we were not to take into account our "Lord Nelsons," our "King Edward VII's." and our vast array of battleships. All those were to pass as nothing at all, and we were simply to estimate any particular type of boat and see that we had twice as many as any one Power in that particular type of ship.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: I did not say so.

MR. McKENNA said that that was the argument the hon. Member used. He would have thought that twelve against nine was a sufficient predominance even if we had nothing else, but we had a very considerable superiority of strength behind the "Dreadnought" type, and he must have stronger arguments brought in support of the hon. Gentleman's interpretation of the two-Power standard before he could admit that Great Britain would not be maintaining in 1911 the two-Power standard as hitherto interpreted. It must be remembered that down to the last three years the battleship superiority of this country over Germany was very considerable. It was generally assumed that the introduction of the "Dreadnought" had altered the whole relations between the two countries. Valuable as most people now agreed the "Dreadnought" was, as a new type of ship, no one would assert that the existence of the "Dreadnought" nullified the existence of the previous kinds of ships. Those must be taken into account in striking a balance between the two Powers. What value were we to apply to battleships which existed prior to the "Dreadnought" type? If he might judge from statements made on the other side of the House, when these types were compared with corresponding types in Germany, he was fully entitled to say that with the preponderance of twelve "Dreadnoughts" as against Germany's nine, the great superiority of the older types of ships would give to this country complete security in 1911. There was no greater mistake than to build more than we needed. The essential for this country was security—absolute and complete security, and he was sure the House of Commons would be willing at any time to submit to sacrifices which were necessary to obtain security. But it was mere waste to go one inch beyond what was security. If we overwhelmed ourselves in any one year with unnecessary ships, we should suffer for it in the future, because no matter what the type of ship was, it would become obsolete, and our hands would be tied when we wanted to be free to build a newer type of ship. The Government had laid down a programme for 1908–1909 which would give the country complete security at the expiration of the time when that programme would be completed. And next year the Government would be prepared to take the foreign increased construction into account, and to propose next year what was sufficient for security to this country in 1911 and 1912. The hon. Gentleman had referred to the inadequate state of the torpedo craft. He did not know how the hon. Gentleman acquired his figure that 50 per cent. of the existing torpedo-destroyers were ineffective. As a matter of fact, there were eight scouts.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE said he did not include scouts.

Mr. McKENNA said that scouts were better than destroyers; and as the Admiralty did not reckon them among the cruisers they thought they were entitled to include them among the torpedo craft. These eight scouts had no corresponding vessels among the torpedo craft of either France or Germany. There were eight scouts, seventy-nine destroyers, and nineteen coastal destroyers of ten years old and under. What period the hon. Gentleman took when he reckoned 50 per cent. of the existing torpedo destroyers as ineffective he was unable to discover.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE said he was not reckoning scouts and he was not reckoning coastal destroyers, which the Admiralty in their own return described as torpedo boats and not destroyers.

Mr. McKENNA said they were called coastal destroyers because they served the purposes of destroyers. He had taken the age of ten years and under in order to please the hon. Gentleman, but for no other reason. In truth, the hon. Gentleman had been misled by something which occurred when he himself was at the Admiralty into estimating the life period of a destroyer at eleven years. In the Return, Appendix No. VII. of the Estimates, the life period of a torpedo boat was estimated at eleven years; and the life period of a gunboat was estimated at fifteen years; and when the hon. Gentleman was at the Admiralty he included—as the Board said at the time and still said, in error—destroyers under the head torpedo boats instead of under the head gunboats.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Why?

Mr. McKENNA said that destroyers approximated more closely to the gunboat class, at any rate in regard to length of life, than to the torpedo-boat class. The Admiralty had always reckoned, and did so now, the life of a torpedo-boat destroyer, for the purpose of depreciation, not at eleven years, but at fifteen years. He was advised, and had no reason to doubt the value of the advice, that the whole of the destroyers were thoroughly good and useful craft. The Admiralty were laying down this year sixteen destroyers. That came on the top of a very considerable provision made quite recently. He thought there were thirteen destroyers made last year and the year before last. The Admiralty had also quite recently, the House would be glad to hear, bought two completed destroyers. They would, therefore, have this year eighteen new destroyers, and it appeared to him, accordingly, that the provision made in this year's Estimates was quite sufficient.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): Only one-tenth of the cost falls on this year.

MR. McKENNA said that that was quite true; but they should be provided for next year. At any rate, the Admiralty were, in this year's Estimates, laying down sixteen destroyers; and they had bought two out and out to replace those lost in the accident. The position was this—they had completed three torpedo-boat destroyers since 1st April; ten more were being built, of which five would be completed before 31st March, making eight during this year; the other five would be completed next year, and they were laying down sixteen others this year, which would also be completed next year. So that this year and next the destroyer flotilla would be increased by no less than twenty-nine boats. That appeared to him, even if the hon. Gentleman's strictures were altogether justified, to be an adequate addition to make to the torpedo craft. In regard to the three large ships which were being built in this country for Brazil he could give the hon. Gentleman no information beyond what he knew upon the subject. But he could assure the hon. Gentleman that the Government naturally would watch the career of these ships with considerable interest. He agreed that it did not seem likely that Brazil could be launching into a Navy of such a size that would require three boats of this magnitude; but the Government had not the slightest reason to suppose that the ships were being built with any hostile purpose towards this country. With regard to the hon. Gentleman's references to recent incidents in the Navy he would say no more than to thank him for his expression of confidence in the Government. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that it would be the aim of the Government to compose any differences which might exist. He was bound to say that these differences appeared to him to be more emphasised in the Press than was in the least called for, and were differences which, so far as the Government were concerned, rested upon unverified rumour. He believed these differences had already, in fact, given place to a more satisfactory condition of things. He was obliged to the hon. Gentleman for the terms in which he had spoken of the Government in the matter.

*MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said he was sure that everyone in every quarter of the House would have received with most sincere appreciation the last remarks of the right hon. Gentleman. The policy which the right hon. Gentleman referred to in the early part of his statement, which was now known as the all-big policy, had been gone into by his hon. friend near him. He felt that that was not the time nor the place for a further discussion as to the wisdom or unwisdom of building craft of that type, or of the wisdom of our policy in the initiation of that type. He did not wish to say anything about that, but he did say that, having accepted the all-big type, there were certain corollaries connected with it which he desired to put before the right hon. Gentleman, for he could not help thinking that they had escaped the consideration they deserved. The first of these was the question of dock accommodation. Having accepted the all-big policy, it was absolutely necessary that we should have increased dock accommodation. This was not like the question of the naval programme, a question of fast or slow construction. It was not a question whether we had a superiority over Germany in the construction of docks. We could not construct naval works any quicker than any of our great rivals.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman wishes to discuss the question of docks, but I must point out that it is not in order on this Estimate.

*MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said he was aware of that, and he apologised for mentioning it. He mentioned it merely as one of the corollaries of the all-big policy in order that it might not be thought that he was passing over the most important of these corollaries. He came to what might be called the accessory craft in the policy now adopted—namely, cruisers and destroyers. The all-big policy had had its counterpart in the case of cruisers. During the past twenty years cruisers had become bigger and bigger, and now they had grown to a size which was actually astounding. Beginning with the Russian "Rurik" in 1894, to which our "Powerful" and "Terrible" were the reply, the world's navies had gradually reached the "Minotaurs," the "Edgar," "Quinets,'" and the "Inflexibles." While that process had been going on, how did we stand in regard to the legitimate work which our cruisers would have to perform in time of war? The reason for this gradual growth was, roughly speaking, one might say this. The idea was that as a single unit was detached it might be able to meet and defeat any other detached unit it might encounter. He wished to point out that this had developed to such a point that these units had become so big and valuable that we could not afford to detach them. In the Memorandum which the Admiralty submitted to the Colonial Conference in 1902 they said—

> "If the enemy's cruisers escaped we could always spare a superior number of vessels to follow them."

That might be true as things stood then, but was it true now? Would any admiral be in a position to detach these highly valuable single units in chasing small protected cruisers? The thing was impossible. All history showed that it was impossible. Admirals had always avoided the risk of detaching a valuable portion of their squadrons. They had to keep their main force absolutely undivided, and no admiral could afford to detach big cruisers for the purpose of using them as detached units. Incidentally he might say that there were many occasions which called for the use of detached units not only in time of war, but in time of peace. How did we stand at the present moment with regard to medium-cruisers since we could not use these big armoured vessels for detached service? If two such cruisers were reckoned as the complement of a battleship in the constitution of a fleet, we stood in a singularly bad situation. In the Channel Fleet there were fourteen battleships and three medium cruisers; in the Atlantic Fleet six battleships and three medium cruisers; and in the Mediterranean Fleet, six battleships and five medium cruisers; or a total of twenty-six battleships and eleven medium cruisers, showing a deficiency of more than two to one.

MR. McKENNA: Is the hon. Member referring to protected cruisers?

*MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Unarmoured. He was referring to the medium ships which an Admiral could afford to detach for special services. The experience of the manœuvres of 1901, when a large cruiser action took place, and all subsequent war experience showed that at the beginning of hostilities there would be a concentration of battleships and large, highly valuable, armoured cruisers; and therefore these would not be available, and on the two-to-one standard there should be forty-one of these medium cruisers. In the Home Fleet there were at the Nore six battleships and three medium cruisers; at Portsmouth, four battleships and eleven medium cruisers; and at Devonport, three battleships and six medium cruisers. Taken on the whole there was, therefore, a deficiency as regarded commissioned ships of forty-seven of these medium cruisers. In the whole Navy there were sixty-seven unarmoured cruisers, thirty-one of which were at present with battleships and the remainder abroad, on subsidiary services and under repair. He submitted to the right hon. Gentleman and to the Committee that our present position with regard to these vessels was not entirely satisfactory when the position of Germany was considered. Germany was laying down every year two and three—he believed in one year four—of these vessels, of not less than 3,500 tons, with 4·1 guns and fairly high speed, and therefore of considerable fighting value. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the function of battleships and squadrons of large armoured cruisers at the present moment was going to be largely that of a containing force; but that function could not be carried out unless there was an adequate screen of scouts. Every admiral knew that it was impossible to maintain any containing force in effective position within range of a hostile attack by torpedo craft alone. Taking destroyers, how did we stand in comparison with Germany? At present we had got of the "River" class—new, really effective destroyers—thirty-four, and four of the "Tribe" class; in all thirty-eight. Now, there were forty-eight German ocean-going torpedo destroyers finished, and of this new class there were actually ten more available in Germany than in this country. He might add that in addition there were seven or eight first-class torpedo boats available in Germany. It was true that we had a much larger number of first-class torpedo boats in this country than in Germany, but they were of no use as a screen for a containing force, because they could not keep at sea sufficiently long to act in the necessary way. Therefore, they might be practically neglected for containing purposes. If we went on building, as projected, we should stand in a little better, but not very much better position. The "Swift" was building; there were projected—eight of the "Tribe" class, and sixteen of a new undescribed class—in all: twenty-five. Germany had twenty-four building and projected of the same class, and a similar remark applied to German projected torpedo boat destroyers. This information was not drawn in any way from confidential, but from the most ordinary sources. He pointed out these facts because he really thought it was high time—he hoped the country had already seen the situation—that the Committee appreciated the consequences which had come along with the adoption of the all-big policy. We needed more cruisers for detached work; and we must have more destroyers for use as a screen. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman and to the Board of Admiralty to pursue in this matter a steady, continuous course. At the present moment they were working by jumps. Disorganisation came from this jumping method of procedure, affecting not only the work in the dockyards, but in private yards and in all the allied trades working outside. It became even more important now that they had permanently adopted a policy of doing naval works out of estimates and not by loan. There was always a great temptation, a great chance, at least a possibility, that when there was a heavy works expenditure to be borne on the Estimates for any one year or a series of years, the work on new construction might be blocked. He did not say it was likely to happen in the immediate future, but it was a possibility, and in order to guard against it, he pressed the right hon. Gentleman to pursue a straight, steady, consistent and thorough policy which would put this country and keep us abreast of our needs, not only with regard to battleships and large armoured cruisers, but with regard to cruisers of medium size, and especially destroyers.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he was sorry the First Lord was not present for the moment, because he wished to take the opportunity—he was entitled to do so on this Vote, for there was an item of expenditure in reference to the naval station at Sydney, New South Wales—of asking the right hon. Gentleman whether he could make any statement as to the position of this country with regard to naval matters towards Australia. It appeared to him that the Estimates the Committee were now considering might be influenced to a considerable degree if the Committee knew exactly where they stood with reference to naval affairs towards the Australian Colonies. There was on the Vote now being discussed a considerable item for the dockyard at Sydney. What he wished to know was whether the First Lord could make a statement or give any information as to the position of this country with regard to Australia in connection with naval matters. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke had quoted a statement made at the last Colonial

Conference. It was at that Conference that the Australian position in connection with naval matters was considered; and it was then agreed that under certain circumstances Australia should not be compelled to make the contribution of £200,000 which she was now making towards the upkeep of the Navy. It was understood that Australia was going to make proposals to place the naval position of the Commonwealth on a new footing. After that a proposal by Australia for the establishment of a small but serviceable fleet for the protection of the Australian coast and under the control of the Commonwealth was published. That proposal created among those connected with Australia a great degree of interest, and its development was watched with considerable anxiety. The interest in these Naval Estimates would be considerably increased if it were known that a new departure had been taken with regard to the Commonwealth of Australia. He had put some Questions from time to time to both the First Lord and his predecessor in office, and had received more or less evasive replies. Not only had he put Questions, but the late Chancellor of the Exchequer had also done so, but neither he nor the right hon. Gentleman had been able to elicit anything in the nature of a satisfactory Answer as to the position of this country under the new proposals made by Australia. The Questions he wished now to ask the First Lord were: Was it not a fact that the Commonwealth Government, a considerable time ago, placed a scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth generally before the Admiralty, and, if so, was the Admiralty going to accept the scheme, or, if not, were the Admiralty prepared to make alternative proposals to the Commonwealth; and could they hold out any hope that a settlement would be arrived at in the matter satisfactory to both this country and Australia. He asked these questions because he saw in an influential daily paper a most remarkable cablegram in connection with this question. He recently asked the First Lord what was the reason for the delay as to the acceptance of this proposal, and the right hon. Gentleman replied that he could only refer to the reply given to a similar Question on 21st May, which was that the scheme as put forward by Mr. Deakin was in bare outline, and required much simplification before it could be discussed with advantage, while the difficulties inherent in the scheme were very great. He said also that the scheme was a complex one and had to be fully considered. The very day after that reply had been given he read in a cablegram published in an influential newspaper that this reply had excited much criticism, and that Mr. Deakin had declared that the real difficulty was that his Government had received no sort of reply from the British Government except that the Board of Admiralty were preparing a scheme. If that was so, it was a position that ought not to exist. If it was the fact that the Australian Government, with the best of good faith, and with every desire to arrive at an arrangement which should be mutually satisfactory, had submitted a definite well thought out scheme for the defence of Australia, and that no reply whatever had been sent to that scheme, the First Lord himself would admit that it was not a state of affairs which should be allowed to continue to exist. Of course, this took place before the right hon. Gentleman came into office, when he was successfully regulating the education of the nation, but the right hon. Gentleman could say, no doubt, that it was being considered, because a message was sent to the Australian Government. But what did that message say? It made no mention of the scheme of the Australian Government. It said that the Government were engaged upon a scheme, and were anxious to arrive at a plan, which they hoped would prove satisfactory. He was, therefore, perfectly entitled to ask what was the position at the present time? He had not the slightest right or desire to speak on behalf of Australia, but he spoke as one who had considerable knowledge of, and some interest in Australia, and as one who had a great desire that what Australia proposed at a great cost to herself should not be lightly treated by the Government, but should receive consideration, not to say courtesy, at the hand of the Admiralty. He asked the First Lord these two or three questions, which he thought were quite requisite. How long ago was the proposal made in regard to Australian naval defence? Was it true that the Admiralty had ever said the problem was complex and required further amplification and could not be used; and did they tell Australia they were considering a scheme of their own? Those were questions which, in the general interest, ought to be satisfactorily answered. There was not a Member in any quarter of the House who would not agree that even if the Commonwealth Government had not moved in the matter, the time was ripe for some new arrangement to be made. He represented a country which paid its full contribution towards the upkeep of the Navy, and which had neither dockyard or stores, and therefore got no benefit from the contribution. Australia paid £200,000, and might get an adequate return from the ships on the Australian station. But everybody was glad that the Commonwealth Government had found themselves strong enough to come forward with a proposal for a Fleet to guard the coast, and certainly no obstacle ought to be placed in the way of the Government in a scheme of this kind. When the Australians, who were a very public-spirited, ambitious, and sensitive people, came forward and offered to bear the cost of their defence out of their own resources, that was something that ought to be treated, not with any degree of coolness at all, but with gratitude by the people of this country, and it was all the more regrettable that there should be this delay and misunderstanding with regard to it.

MR. McKENNA said the hon. Member had stated his case upon the information he had received quite fairly, but the information at the hon. Gentleman's disposal did not agree with that at the disposal of the Government. There was at this moment a proposal by the Australian Government before the Admiralty. The Government had no desire to disturb the present arrangement, but it was quite natural that the Australian Commonwealth should desire to have a scheme of their own. Last year, he thought, in June, they sent in a scheme. Where the hon. Member and he differed with regard to this matter was in two points. First, in his description of the scheme. The hon. Member described it as a complete scheme of Australian naval defence.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I do not think I used the word "complete."

MR. McKENNA said he understood the hon. Member to say that in Australia they had drawn up a plan, and he thought the hon. Member said it was "complete." The description the Government would give of it was contained in the admirable statement of the First Lord on the presentation of the Estimates, when he said the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth had indicated to the Admiralty the outline of a scheme for the establishment of a flotilla of destroyers and submarines, which was then under consideration. Therefore he and the hon. Member differed as to the description of the scheme.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he did not remember that he had used the word "complete," but he would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, if the scheme were adopted, it would do away with the present agreement and relieve Australia from the contributions now made.

MR. McKENNA said the proposed arrangement was, of course, intended to supplant the existing arrangement for a contribution by Australia. The Government were perfectly willing to assist the Commonwealth in devising a scheme of their own; but what Australia proposed the Government here regarded as a mere outline upon which no action could be taken. It considered that the scheme required very considerable development and modification before it became a practicable scheme. No immediate action could take place on the proposal because the Government held it was only an outline. That was the first point. The second point was whether a proper reception had been given to the scheme. Here again his information differed from the hon. Member's. He was informed that a proper communication had been addressed to the Australian Commonwealth telling them that their scheme was being inquired into, that the Admiralty were seeking to construct the best scheme, that Mr. Deakin's scheme was in the fullest sense under the consideration of the Admiralty, and that they hoped, if it were not possible to frame a scheme of their own, to amplify and frame a scheme on the model of the Australian proposal, and then they hoped to come to an arrangement with the Australian Commonwealth. Delay in these circumstances was essential. Some days ago the hon. Member had asked him whether the Government had put forward any alternative scheme of their own. No, they had not, because the Admiralty were quite content to stand by the existing arrangement; but they were very anxious to help the Australian Commonwealth, and they were now endeavouring to do so by constructing a scheme on the outlines which had been suggested.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could afford any proof of what he had just stated. Had the Australian Commonwealth even been told that the scheme required simplification, that it was regarded as complex, and that the Government were moulding it into shape? He held in his hand a cable message in which Mr. Deakin was represented to have said that he had received no reply of any sort further than a statement that the Government were preparing a scheme of their own, which they hoped Australia would take.

MR. McKENNA said that the message the hon. Member quoted did not purport to be a statement by Mr. Deakin himself. It was a reporter's account of an interview with him, and he did not think Mr. Deakin would make himself responsible for the accuracy of every word of the report.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: In what respect is it inaccurate?

MR. McKENNA said it was inaccurate in this respect, that Mr. Deakin had been informed that the Government were considering his outline scheme and were endeavouring to develop the outline and to form it into a practicable scheme.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon) thought the First Lord of the Admiralty must he satisfied with the turn the debate had taken, and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would agree that there was a general desire on both sides of the House to co-operate on naval matters. By far the most important part of the First Lord's speech was that in which he said the Government would be prepared to lay down next year what would be necessary. The whole gist of the arguments of the Opposition was contained in those words. The First Lord had hinted that the Opposition were not justified in making reference to future programmes, but that they ought to be confined to what was on the Vote. In ordinary circumstances he would think that unanswerable, but, unless what the First Lord had said was amplified, he did not think the debate would really serve its purpose, satisfactory as it had been in many respects. What was the situation? They had now a Vote for new construction which was smaller than any Vote for new construction which had been taken for many years; and they were face to face with a continuous decline in the total expenditure on the Navy. That decline might be justified on certain grounds. It might be justified on the ground of less need, or that we were so strong that we could afford to hold our hand, or because, possibly, we were capable of accomplishing in a short time what other people took a long time to accomplish. Certainly the need was not less than formerly. Admittedly it was as great as, and greater than, it had ever been. He admitted with his hon. friend the Member for Fareham that the Navy was practically stronger than it had ever been, but it was also true that the need was greater than it had ever been. Was it true that we could do with greater expedition what other people could not do? He doubted it. They had been told three years in succession that great economy had been effected with regard to the Navy. If that economy was a real ultimate saving of the money of the country, it was an economy indeed; but if it was a mere postponement of expenditure, it was no economy at all, and he was going to suggest that it was not only a postponement of expenditure, but a postponement of expenditure to a time when it could not be met. There was only one supposition on which the present Estimates were justified, namely, that the arrears of past years could and would be made up in time. The First Lord had spoken of the provision in this year's programme made for destroyers. He spoke of sixteen destroyers. Well, that would not be an inadequate provision, but there was no such provision in the Estimates for this year. That item, like every other item of expenditure to which the Government was committed involved postponement to a later date. The cost of those destroyers was £1,200,000, and of that £64,000 was taken this year. That was all. He thought he could probably sum up the situation as it presented itself to those responsible for the administration of the Navy in this way. The Naval Lords had been asked what it was they required to enable us to hold our naval position, and they had said that the naval requirements did not necessitate the laying down of a great number of ships during the last three years, including the present year. Then they had been told: "If that is so, will it meet your purposes if you have the ships in 1909, 1910, and 1911?" And, following his own hypothesis, he magined the Naval Lords had answered: "That will meet the military needs of the situation," and the laying down had been postponed till those years. He had before him the figures as to the reduction in construction during the last three years. In 1904 the amount taken was £11,000,000, in 1905 it was £9,000,000, and this year it had gone down to £7,500,000. Could they carry out the pledge the First Lord had given to lay down next year and the year after, all that was required? That was the whole point. He had the greatest confidence in the administration of the Admiralty, though he did not altogether approve, if he might respectfully say so, of the attitude of mind of the man who would say: "We take this pledge in fulfilment of our professional claims. We are divorced from the necessity of examining whether it is going to be fulfilled. Our part is to tell you the military necessities—your part is to give us a pledge that you will find the money." Whoever the man was, whether a Member of Parliament or a sailor, he had, he thought, opportunities of judging what were the probabilities of the situation, and a pledge of that kind ought not to be taken as altogether satisfactory unless he was perfectly convinced that it could be fulfilled. But in the House of Commons they were looking, not on the technical, but on the financial aspect of the programme. For three years in his life it had been his duty to draw up the Navy Estimates as Secretary to the Admiralty, and he had gained some familiarity with the work. He had applied all the experience he possessed to the estimate of what must be the addition to the existing shipbuilding Vote if they were to carry out a programme which he believed to be far from excessive, but a moderate, conservative, and adequate programme. To do that he believed the expenditure would have to be very heavy indeed next year and the year after. In his opinion the new construction Vote must rise by £3,000,000, possibly by £4,000,000. The total should be £10,000,000 or £11,000,000 for new construction alone. But Votes 8 and 9 were also concerned with matters quite apart from new construction. There was the whole of the repair work, which, as they knew, had been immensely curtailed.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): Not curtailed.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he was perfectly aware that £700,000 had been taken this year in excess of what was taken last year for repair work, in order to try to make up past defects. Then they had to consider the great increase in all the Store Votes in addition to new construction under Votes 8 and 9. Then, again, three or four years ago a large number of ships were struck off the Navy List. He was not there to consider whether that policy was right or wrong. Personally he thought it was justified; but he had always thought that we ought to have followed the German plan and filled up the gaps that were made. We had not attempted to fill up the gaps we had made. We were building now sixteen destroyers, and a large number of small craft that ought to have been laid down last year and the year before. Now they would find they would be piling the whole of this enormous expenditure on to the next two years if this effort was to be made. They had been considering not any addition to our preponderance, but merely a minimum which would enable us to obtain equality with one single Power at the end of 1912. He had only referred to one or two items of the increased expenditure which their policy would impose on them during the next two years. They had been living on stores. There were enormous items of stores consumed and not replaced. They would have to be replaced on an unprecedented scale, and it would not be merely a case of replacing one vanished store by another of equivalent quality and character. Every fresh store would be of a more expensive kind than that of which it took the place. In the old vessel they had 3-pounder and 6-pounder guns, which were now being replaced by the 12-pounder and 25-pounder, and 4-inch. All these had correspondingly more expensive ammunition and mountings and cost more to the country. In addition the Government had been exceedingly virtuous and decided to put an end to loan expenditure and carry the items on the Estimates. That course was fraught with very important consequences. What it had meant up to the present was that the expenditure had gone off the loan and had not gone on to the Estimates. They all admitted the necessity of an immense addition to the building programme next year and the year after and concurrently with that they must build a new dock at Portsmouth. The cost would be £1,000,000, and they had taken £50,000 this year. Where was the rest to come from?

MR. McKENNA said he did not see how increasing the shipbuilding Vote this year would help them next. To build warships this year would only increase the Estimates next year and not reduce them. He did not see how the right hon. Gentleman's argument led to the conclusion that Vote 8 ought to be increased. Any ship laid down this year would be charged during the whole of next year and would be more expensive than if it were postponed till next year's Estimates.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said that that was obvious. He was trying to point out that they had seriously jeopardised the position by not building these ships in the last three years, and if instead of these large reductions of two or three millions in the last two years they had built half of these destroyers they would have them now. But if they had this concurrent expenditure now they would make it impossible to add to the shipbuilding programme next year, and that was the very danger he anticipated. The greater part of the balance of the £1,000,000 for the Portsmouth dock must come on the Estimates for next year. Then £3,500,000 was to be spent on Rosyth, of which they had taken £30,000. Five years ago he was on the Clyde and saw on the shores of what was then a mud bank a model of what was to be Messrs. Beardmore's great works. Now they had a complete installation, dry dock, wet dock and machinery shops where mud then was, and they were building a first-class battleship in a year. That was how work ought to be done and could be done, and that was work economically done, and he refused to accept the proposition that they were going to waste money and jeopardise the safety of the Navy by spreading out this expenditure on Rosyth for seven years to come. They were going to have a very large proportion of this £3,000,000 thrown upon the Estimates for the next year and the year after, and all that would come on the top of this enormous expenditure for building. In addition to that they would have the ordinary automatic increase of the fleet. What he feared was lest they should find themselves next year in this position. Demands were going to be made on the Exchequer unprecedented in their character. To some of them the Navy was paramount above all other claims. No other interest could survive if the interests protected by the Navy were in jeopardy. They knew the Exchequer of the country was to be burdened with sums of which they had only dimly understood the magnitude up to the present. They did not know by what means these great claims were to be met. They had been told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a passage which had not excited sufficient indignation in the House, that in order to meet that expenditure he was looking out for more hen roosts to rob. That was an absurd statement, but the unfortunate part of the thing was that it was true. There was no other means at present from which the money was going to be forthcoming, and what they were very anxious about was whether the First Lord was really intending, with all this expenditure, for which of course he was not primarily responsible, but which was to be placed on the taxpayer next year, to make good the words he had used, and to lay down a really adequate programme for the Navy next year. It would be a very grievous disappointment to the country if, when the time came for the presentation of the Navy Estimates next year, they were told that it was impossible for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to meet them—that the programme was limited by purely financial considerations. He would gladly take the First Lord's word for it. If the First Lord could give them an assurance that he was clear about this financial question, and was certain that next year he could obtain his colleagues' assent to the necessary programme which he had led them to believe would be the programme brought forward next year they would be satisfied. But it would be a great betrayal of the confidence of the House and the country if that programme were diminished by one jot or tittle on account of financial pressure. They were going into this thing with their eyes open. For three years they had been diminishing expenditure on the sole ground that it was possible to overtake the loss incurred in the expenditure of two years only. If they did not spend this money now they would not achieve the object they had in view. In Germany a loan of £50,000,000 had been raised, and another loan of £50,000,000 was going to be raised. He doubted whether a Supplementary Estimate would meet the situation. He believed they were rapidly approaching a state of things when only a loan could meet the position in which they found themselves. That was a matter for the responsible Government. They were running into a very dangerous situation. They were talking with unanimity about a Navy Vote which next year would involve an addition of some £4,000,000 at least to our expenditure. There were other Ministers beside the First Lord of the Admiralty and there were other claims to which those Ministers had pledged them. There was only one source from which all those claims could be met—the common purse of the taxpayer—and they ought to be very careful to see that the predominant claim was met before any others were allowed to come into competition with them.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central) said the statement of the First Lord would be received with considerable satisfaction on that side of the House, and they at least had none of those misgivings which the right hon. Gentleman had just uttered. He wished very much before the First Lord responded to the question about the Australian Colony, one had had some opportunity of introducing the question of South Africa and Natal, and the position they held towards the Admiralty in respect of contributions, and also whether the contribution paid by South Africa was to continue on the same basis as formerly or if a certain sum was to be deducted towards the expenses of the Royal Naval Volunteers or not, and also if Natal and South Africa were to be approximated in the treatment they received. With reference to what was said by the late Financial Secretary to the Admiralty about Sir William White, he did make one decided point about the construction of "Dreadnoughts." He said the construction of the plans and the hurrying on of the "Dreadnought" was, in the circumstances, somewhat unnecessary. That was distinctly proved by the fact that before the results deduced from the experimental trials, other ships, said to be improvements on the "Dreadnought," were laid down. That seemed to infer that the "Dreadnought" was somewhat hurried. What the country very earnestly desired to know was that the money voted for Navy construction was properly expended. They knew that the money was voted for a particular object, but they wished to know conclusively whether the money was devoted to that object, and whether or not it was spent to the best advantage. Now how were they to discover that? He thought the best plan would be to have a special Committee of the House to audit the Navy accounts, and see that the money was properly expended. If such a Committee were properly selected from all parts of the House, that would give a certain amount of confidence to private Members, because they would be able to get a Report from the Committee as to whether the money had been properly spent upon the objects for which it was provided. That would not only be a great satisfaction to private Members, but it would add to the satisfaction of the country generally, and would greatly increase the popularity of the Navy. That Committee would not have to be too numerous, or there would be too much talking and too little work, and experts, cranks, and faddists should be carefully excluded. They wanted a Committee composed of quiet business men, with business habits and intellectual power, who would ruthlessly tear out of every expert the naked facts, and rule out everything in the nature of prejudice. Such a Committee would give them a very great advantage, and would assure the country that the money voted was properly spent. Hon. Members on the Ministerial side were equally interested in the Navy, and were just as determined to see it made efficient as any hon. Members sitting on the Opposition side. He was not going to discuss the relative position of the British Navy to that of Germany, because he thought it had been made quite clear that our Navy in relation to Germany, was four times as strong. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] That was the absolute position at the present moment. With regard to torpedo destroyers he thought that was a subject which required the careful consideration of the Government. On paper, however, they seemed irresistibly stronger, the proportion being 156 against 62. As for speed or any other test, the same result would be discovered. There were, however, one or two other points, and one of them was the life of a torpedo destroyer. The Germans put it down at twelve years, but afterwards those torpedoes were not discarded altogether. If they applied that test to this country, they would find that the Germans would have, in 1917, 144 torpedoes of twelve years of age and under, and if this country went on building at the same rate, and excluding scouts in that connection, we should have only 96. Naturally, this state of things had caused some anxiety, not only to hon. Members of the House, but to a large number of people in the country generally. There was another point he wished to raise, upon which he knew he would not have the sympathy of anybody at all, and that was a suggestion that they should construct and build a somewhat different type of vessel altogether, disregarding the rules about speed and new construction, and lay down a sort of coastal automobile steel fort. At the present moment no account was taken of the development which was taking place in submarine and floating mines. He thought it was quite possible that in a year or two floating mines would attain a very much greater importance than was attached to them at the present time. They had already heard of a vessel capable of laying 30,000 of these mines in a very short time. What was there to prevent any number of those mines being strewn about the sea? It was quite within the bounds of reason that all their plans laid down in preparation for next year might prove to be wrong. He put the period down at ten or twelve years, because by no bounds of possibility could Germany be ready to fight a great Power under that time, even if the possibility of a raid of this country were conceded. By that time he believed the whole of the Channel and the entire coast of the North Sea could be placed in a position of very curious neutrality, because the whole of the coast and the sea could be strewn with mines. It was quite easy to suppose that vast numbers of mines could be spread all over the North Sea and the Channel during that period. Under those circumstances it was apparent that no nation would risk a £2,000,000 battleship by sending it into those very dangerous waters where mines were as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. The result would be that only small vessels or destroyers would be sent out, and in his opinion the time was certainly coming when that would be the state of affairs. And how immensely that would add to the safety of this particular country! Suppose, for instance, the Channel and the North Sea were impracticable as far as battleships were concerned because of the very serious risk involved by the strewing of floating mines. What would be the result? Germany would be alsolutely helpless and futile, because she could not get her ships out and her commerce would be completely stopped. On the other hand, we should very well be able to thank God that we had a back entrance to our island. If the Channel and the North Sea were blocked with mines, our commerce could be conducted from the west ports instead of from the east ports. Under those circumstances we should not want to risk our great battleships, and what we wanted was something not so remarkable for its speed, but very heavily armed in the shape of a steady platform vessel which could be towed to wherever it was wanted. On the other hand, supposing the mines were in this extremely dangerous position and we wanted to use the Fleet to the best advantage. Naturally we should try and get our ships as near as we could to the enemy across the North Sea, and by firing at a very long range endeavour to harass the enemy in their ports. Therefore, he thought it was important that we should have floating battleships constructed and armoured in the way he had indicated. Of course, there would have to be arrangements for clearing away the mines. The point, however, which he wanted to make was really the question of the Committee which he thought was most desirable. Such a Committee could be easily formed and it would be most serviceable and would answer the purpose just as efficiently as the Committee on Public Accounts. They would then have a very careful and proper audit of the Navy by business men, they would be assured that the contracts would be properly placed and that the proper proportion of work was given to the dockyards and to private firms, and the minds of hon. Members like himself would be relieved of a certain feeling of responsibility in connection with those grave and important matters which at the present moment they were obliged to share.

*MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield Central) said he could not see why the Public Accounts Committee could not somewhat extend its functions instead of another Committee being appointed, because he did not think they could get a more capable Committee than the Public Accounts Committee. At the present moment the functions of that Committee were somewhat restricted, but there was no reason why the House should not determine upon some extension of their duties. He was rather sorry to interrupt the discussion of such very important issues in order to call the attention of the representatives of the Admiralty to a point which, although it was not of immediate national concern, at the same time was of vital importance to the people concerned. He wished to know whether it was possible for the Admiralty to expedite some of the expenditure which would have to be borne on this Vote next year if not this year. He was speaking in the interests of a large number of working people who would be very much affected. It was admitted that next year there would have to be a larger shipbuilding programme, and then the Vote would have to be increased. All he was asking was whether it was not possible by way of a Supplementary Estimate to throw some of the actual cost of that programme on this year's Vote. He thought, after all, that the Admiralty had some interest in doing this, because, if they broke up the establishments at which this class of work was done, they would find it very difficult to replace them and to meet the requirements of the Navy later on. He believed that state of things might be found by the hon. Gentleman next year. Except for the fact that the money would have to be spent some six months earlier he did not believe that in the end there would be any difference whatever from the Treasury point of view in taking the course which he suggested. There was very serious distress at present among those in whom he was interested; they were not now his constituents, and, therefore, he did not speak from the political point of view. Unfortunately they chose two years ago that he should no longer be their Member, but that would not lessen his interest in them, and if the hon. Gentleman who now represented them, and who intended to raise this question, went to a division upon it, he would certainly support him. He most earnestly asked the Government to see whether something could not be done in the matter, because already in the summer, when there was a good deal of casual labour to be had, the distress was exceedingly acute. If the Admiralty put off to next year this work which would have to be done in the end they would gain nothing, and these poor people would lose everything.

Mr. WALTERS (Sheffield, Brightside) said he had been surprised at the unanimity of the two front benches as to the requisite strength of the Navy and the amount of money to be spent on the shipbuilding programme in the next few years. It was therefore quite apparent that the small expenditure provided for in this year's Estimate was not really a question of economy, because if the Government contemplated spending all this large sum of money to complete the programme to which the Opposition had agreed by 1912 then what had taken place was a sort of sham economy in this year's Estimates. At the best it was only a postponement of expenditure.

Mr. McKENNA : No.

Mr. WALTERS said that unless he was very much mistaken the Government had agreed with the Opposition as to the standard of strength to be maintained, and as to the number of ships to be constructed by the year 1912.

Mr. McKENNA : I said nothing about the number of ships. I shall wait and see what will be necessary next year.

Mr. WALTERS said in that case he could not in the least understand the sword-practice that had taken place between the two front benches as to whether by the end of 1911 or the bening of 1912 we were to produce a programme equal to that actually in contemplation and laid down by Germany.

Mr. McKENNA : Not laid down.

Mr. James Hope.

Mr. WALTERS said they were agreed that the two-Power standard must be maintained, and the Prime Minister had said that if the progress of Germany's shipbuilding foreshadowed by the Leader of the Opposition was maintained, then we should lay down such additional ships as would enable us to maintain our supremacy. He himself did not like that way of looking at the question. They had two alternatives. One was to pursue a consistent and steady policy of shipbuilding—the other was that they should this year, and next year, perhaps for three years, pursue a policy of retrenchment, and then follow it by a spending policy on additional shipbuilding. The latter was an unwise policy. They were deliberately contemplating the possibility of directing their programme specifically and definitely against Germany. Suppose that in 1910 or 1911 there were strained international relations, and that the Admiralty was then putting forward a programme for a large increase of shipbuilding, that would tend to accentuate the strained relations between this country and Germany. It was eminently desirable, in the interests of international peace, that our shipbuilding programme should not have the appearance of being directed against any particular nation. If we were going on a policy of two or three years of reduction, to be followed by three or four years of largely increased expenditure, foreign Powers would not wait for the moment most advantageous to us when we had reached the summit of our programme, they would probably chose the period when we were least prepared to meet them—when we were at the bottom of our expenditure, and therefore least ready for an international emergency. Our policy should be to frame for ourselves what we believed to be an adequate programme and then carry it out steadily year by year. The present policy was not economical; it was very much more costly to build ships in a panic. If they were going to rush through a large number of ships in a short space of time, placing orders right and left, and involving the working of overtime, they would very soon find that the price of the ships would be largely in excess of the normal. Then there was another side to the question—that of the employment of workpeople. He would never dream of asking the House—even though he represented a constituency interested in this work—to spend money in constructing instruments of destruction for the mere purpose of finding work for the unemployed; but if they withdrew from the ordinary processes of industry a large number of people and trained them in the manufacture of these instruments of destruction; if they had huge works constructed for that very purpose; if the sole means of the livelihood of these people depended on this employment, then it was the duty of the Government to give some sort of steadiness, some kind of continuity, to that work. Some people talked glibly about men displaced in one industry finding employment in another. That was a figment of the brain of the armchair economist. When a workman was deprived of employment in the avocation in which he had been trained, he found it next to impossible to get employment in some other trade. It was an absolutely cruel policy to play fast and loose with the interests of workpeople in this manner, and to expect to have at one moment a small amount of employment and at another moment a large amount of employment. An ordinary decent employer would hesitate to run his factory on those lines. In Germany, where the State owned the railways, the policy was to reserve works of construction and so forth for times of trade depression, and in that way to steady employment in the labour market. We seemed to do precisely the opposite. In a time of trade depression the Government said, "We will practise economy," and their notion of "practising economy" was to throw thousands of men out of employment. In the name of common sense, let the Government give the largest State employment at a time when there was the greatest trade depression. He believed the State Departments were responsible for more overtime and for more unemployment than any other body of people in the country. They distributed their orders just at a time convenient to themselves, and they gave a short time for the execution of these orders, when they might just as well have distributed them in good time, and left ample opportunity for the work to be done. He was speaking in the interests both of the nation and of the workpeople when he declared that he found himself in disagreement with the present policy of the Government.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover) said that nobody would deny that there was great force in the argument that they could not suddenly expand the production of armaments and other material of war. It was like the physical energy of a man getting his second wind. He had to get through a period of strain and pain before arriving at his best form. So it was with the production of ships and guns. Unless the Government factories kept up their stock and at the same time private manufacturers were enabled to continue a certain amount of production, the Admiralty could not command the power of production which they needed when the day of strain came. That was true; but it was also true as the First Lord had practically admitted, that the period of strain was coming in the near future. The only inference which could be drawn from the statement of the First Lord in answer to the right hon. Member for Croydon was that next year or the year after, there must be a great increase in the Navy Estimates; whether it would be five millions, four millions, or three millions, they would not know until next year. But if only three millions, the First Lord and the Board of Admiralty had, like other human beings, to succumb to the pressure of those with whom they worked. He gladly joined in the compliments paid to the First Lord; and he hoped he would not be regarded as qualifying these compliments or criticising him and the Board of Admiralty, if he ventured to point out that the right hon. Gentleman had added nothing that afternoon to what was said on behalf of the Government during the debate in the month of March last. The sum and substance of the statement then made was that the Government were doing all that was necessary to maintain the two-Power standard, and all that was necessary to the large dock development on the eastern side of this island. That was precisely what was said by the Prime Minister on 10th March last. In that debate it was argued from those benches, and also by the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean, that granting it was necessary to have a certain number of battleships, heavy cruisers and torpedo boat destroyers, it was also necessary to push on at Rosyth with the basins and docks capable of receiving ships of the type of the "Dreadnought." In his opinion, we were only keeping just ahead of Germany in regard to the most modern type of torpedo-boat destroyers, as well in regard to the battleships of the "Dreadnought" type. The argument of the First Lord was that account must be taken of the battleships which had only just been superseded in excellence by "Dreadnoughts," and also of all torpedo-boat destroyers built within the past eleven or fifteen years. Up to this point that was true; but was it not also true that year by year our superiority, our supremacy, at sea would be stated more and more in terms of the newest type of battleships and the newest types of destroyers? That was certain if there was to be the little increase, which was the natural inference to be drawn from the speech of the First Lord. They knew that the right hon. Gentleman meant to be as good as his word, but his word was no better than that of the Prime Minister on 10th March last, or the words of his predecessor. They were then told that they ought not to persist in criticism, because the Shipbuilding Vote would be taken in July, and that then the Government would be in a position to give assurances to the country. The Government had given no assurance. Nothing of the kind. They had convinced the Committee that the financial pressure, which they knew to be great and grinding, was already sufficiently pressing to prevent the expansion of any building programme. He was told that they did not hold out hopes, but they did say: "Do not continue your criticism now, because the Shipbuilding Vote is the pivot of our policy." They made their criticism now on the Shipbuilding Vote, because there was a desire in the country for fuller information as to the necessity of an increase in the "Dreadnought" Fleet, and there was an apprehension that the policy of the Government was, to a certain extent, influenced by the general circumstances in which they found themselves. The curiosity of the public, which he believed to be legitimate, and the apprehension of the country, which he believed to be reasonable, sprang from two causes which acted and re-acted on each other. It sprang from a naval policy which must of necessity involve a greater financial strain, and from a domestic policy which hypothecated all the money which this or any other Government could afford. The country was committed to the "all-big" naval policy. That policy demanded a successive increase in the amount of money the country had to spend upon the Navy. He was not criticising that policy, but he asked the Committee to face the facts involved by the deliberate acceptance of that policy by this country. There was a minor point which deserved consideration. By the acceptance of the "all-big" policy we had withdrawn our flag from the high seas in many parts of the world. Showing the flag was a great assistance to diplomacy. Diplomacy was a buffer state between this country and war, and if we weakened our diplomacy by withdrawing our flag from certain parts of the world—it might be right, or it might be wrong—we diminished, of course, the kind of protection against war which we got from diplomacy. Last March the Government thought it might be necessary to build some ships to keep up that diplomatic work, if he might call it so; but they had had no further information on the subject. In this year's programme there were six protected cruisers laid down; but it did not seem to him that the provision of six was adequate for the purpose, and still less did it provide adequately for the eyes of the fleet of "Dreadnoughts" which the Government were going to provide. A matter of greater importance was that the adoption of this "all-big" policy had been imitated by other countries. Therefore, if we must keep ahead of our rivals in the construction of those monster vessels we should have to keep ahead also of our rivals in constructing the necessary ministering vessels also. The issue of war would be more rapid in the future than it had been in the past; there would be more at stake on the first onset of a naval war than when we had a greater number of ships built at a small cost. If that were true, it would not be denied that a naval defeat might come more rapidly. But even without a naval defeat our food supplies might be cut off, followed by a collapse of public credit. There should, therefore, be a large margin that we might enjoy a sense of security; but he did not find that large margin on the Government programme. All the Committee were told was that there would be a superiority over Germany in "Dreadnoughts" of perhaps one vessel at the end of the year 1911, and they had to wait until next year's Estimates in order to have that stated in more definite terms.

MR. McKENNA: There will be a superiority of three.

MR. WYNDHAM said that first of all the right hon. Gentleman had stated that in 1911 there would be twelve of our vessels of the "Dreadnought" and the "Invincible" class to Germany's nine; but he did not deny the statement that if Germany pressed on with her programme we should have to make a greater increase in our programme next year to prevent the figures becoming thirteen and twelve.

MR. McKENNA: If Germany completes her programme, and we only lay down one ship next year, the right hon. Gentleman's statement is true; but there is no reason to suppose we shall only lay down one.

MR. WYNDHAM said that, on the contrary, the Admiralty would have to lay down five next year, certainly they would have to lay down at least four; and there would be a very great expansion in the amount of money to be found for this Vote in future years. These "Dreadnoughts" and "Invincibles" would require a greater number of attendant torpedo-boats, destroyers, and cruisers. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Admiralty had plenty of such boats. Nobody expected any Government suddenly to complete its policy in all its bearings; but the right hon. Gentleman would not deny that the creation of a great Fleet on the eastern side and the necessity of the auxiliary ships keeping out at sea longer and having a larger number of ships to relieve them, had raised a certain apprehension in the public mind that the Admiralty were being driven to economise on these auxiliaries in order to make good their pledges in regard to the capital ships. It might be said that it was easier to build torpedo-boats, destroyers, and cruisers than capital ships, and that by the time they built these they could, within that period, give them all the necessary auxiliary armaments. Again he said that the Government were thus tying their hands by a perfectly futile self-denying ordinance and piling high financial burdens on future years to a point which no country could bear. He did not think that the First Lord of the Admiralty would be prepared to dispute in the main the arguments which he had ventured to address to him. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to deny that, with regard to all these three questions, there must be growing expenditure—and rapidly-growing expenditure. The Government had tied its hands by a perfectly futile self-denying ordinance. They said that in regard to defence they would not in any circumstances have recourse to loans. What an absurd position to take up in regard to self-defence, on which not only social reform, but the freedom to enjoy social reform depended. At the same time they embarked in a domestic policy which hypothecated all the resources which they and their successors could contemplate would be at their disposal, yet, so far as defence went, the Government's policy towards rivals who might become opponents was to say to them: "Just you wait." We had no reason to suppose that they would wait. In respect of their domestic policy the Government had indulged in financial debauch. It was clear that we ought to build more "Dreadnoughts" and "Invincibles," more cruisers, more torpedo-boat destroyers, and that larger sums of money would have to be more rapidly spent on naval bases. It was not clear that the Government intended to do so, whatever words might imply, and it was not clear that they could do so—even if they intended to do so—in view of the obligations they had undertaken, hasty in conception and vicious and indefinite in scope. We had a foreign policy which everyone approved, but which, unfortunately, was misunderstood in the one quarter from which challenge of our maritime supremacy would come. We had an Army policy which reduced the military forces of our country and which in Continental eyes would have an aspect of transitional weakness greater, perhaps, than really existed; and we had a domestic policy which brought upon the Government from some of its supporters demands for a further reduction at all risks in Army and Navy expenditure. They were, in these circumstances, entitled to ask from the Government that they should convince the people that the Navy was not to suffer because of the presence of these supporters, that the defensive policy, which was the key to all our policy and the foundation of our safety, should not in common with so much else become the by-product of happy-go-lucky legislation.

*Dr. MACNAMARA thought the right hon. Gentleman would forgive him for not following him into what he termed the financial debauch in the domestic policy of the Government and for confining himself to the subject matter of the Vote. As the Committee was aware, the Vote provided for shipbuilding in the yards and by contract, for repairs and alterations to ships, for fuel and sea stores, and the *personnel* of the arsenals at home and abroad. The total of the three sections of the Vote made up £14,313,900. The total of new construction was £7,545,200. Of this amount £2,670,370 was being applied to the completion of oustanding parts of the new programmes of 1904–5, 1905–6, and 1906–7; £4,124,832 was being applied in prosecution of the new programme of 1907–8, and £750,000 would be applied to the initiation of the programme of 1908–9. Comment had been made on the small amount of the total applied to the initiation of the present year's new programme. They were, in this respect, following the rule of their predecessors, who set aside roughly one-tenth.

Mr. WYNDHAM: That point has been made and we have made our reply, which is that that was the usual amount, that these circumstances are unusual, and, when you were committed to this great growth of expenditure it would have been wise to say that a larger sum was needed.

*Dr. MACNAMARA denied that the present circumstances were unusual, and pointed out that that being so the Government had followed the precedent of its predecessors and set aside roughly one-tenth of the new construction Vote towards the initiation of the new programme. In the outstanding part of the programme of 1904–5 was included the "Agamemnon" which had been delivered, and the "Lord Nelson," which it was hoped to deliver before the close of the year. There were four armoured cruisers in that programme, one of which, the "Defence," would be delivered before the close of the financial year. Two had been previously delivered, the fourth was ordered. Of the 1905–6 programme there was one "Dreadnought," and he quite followed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover when he said that if we built "Dreadnoughts" we could not have so many small craft to fly our flag all over the world. Then there were four armoured cruisers, the "Indomitable," which was delivered last month and which would start on Wednesday with the Prince of Wales to Canada; the "Invincible," and the "Inflexible," which they hoped to have before the close of the year. The fourth was not ordered. But on the "Dreadnought" which was delivered in December, 1906, no money was spent out of this estimate. On the three armoured cruisers which were ordered money had to be spent. Of five ocean-going destroyers delayed because of the strikes in the North three were delivered, the "Cossack," the "Tartar," and the "Mohawk," The "Afridi" and "Ghurka" had had their trials and were on the point of delivery. The "Swift," a special type of fast destroyer, to be delieved he hoped late in the current year, and the Royal yacht "Alexandra," delivered in the early part of this year, were also in the 1905–1906 programme. Of the 1906–1907 programme the outstanding parts were much more numerous, and the Admiralty had been spending money on the "Temeraire," the "Bellerophon," and the "Superb," the fourth in the programme not having been ordered.

It was hoped to have these three great battleships before the end of the financial year. There were five ocean-going destroyers. They ordered two—the "Amazon" and the "Saracen." These they hoped to have before the end of the financial year. Of twelve coastal destroyers seven were already completed, and others were on the point of delivery. Twelve submarines were either delivered or would be delivered this year. Of the 1907–1908 programme three battleships—the "St. Vincent," the "Collingwood," and the "Vanguard"—were all laid down. The "St. Vincent" was expected to be completed in 1909, and the "Collingwood" and the "Vanguard" in 1910. The unarmoured cruiser "Boadicea," laid down at Pembroke, was already launched and was expected to be completed probably by the end of the financial year. Of five ocean-going destroyers three were already laid down, and were all expected to be completed during the final part of next year; twelve first-class torpedo-boats would probably be completed during the year 1909; of a number of submarines, twelve would be completed this year and next year. He had mentioned these programmes to show how much of the present Vote they had to spend on the outstanding parts of the programmes of previous years. Coming to the programme of 1908–1909, for the initiation of which £750,000 was set aside, it included a battleship of the "St. Vincent" type, a large armoured cruiser—an improved "Indomitable"—six fast protected cruisers, the first of which, the "Bellona," was to be built at Pembroke, the laying down of sixteen destroyers and a number of submarine boats, estimated to cost £500,000 in all. That exhausted the £7,545,200 for new construction. Then there were the repairs. The right hon. Member for Croydon had spoken rather disparagingly of the amount set aside for repairs, but this was one of the most significant features of the present Estimate. The present Estimate for repairs was £2,494,027. That exceeded the amount of last year by £693,829, and of the year before by £865,927. This meant more than it looked, because the policy of having minor repairs done by the ship's company had been developed to an extent hitherto unknown, while the policy of striking ships off the effective list had set money free for the repairing of effective vessels. The fleet exercises now in progress gave complete evidence of the more effective way in which repairs had been carried out. There were 317 vessels now in the Home waters effectively performing war duties —twenty-nine battleships, sixty cruisers and scouts, 178 torpedo craft, thirty-five submarines, and fifteen vessels of miscellaneous classes. The way these craft had been mobilised for war duties reflected great credit on the yards, and the way in which their crews had been mobilised reflected the greatest credit on the Admiralty. He might say that although he was himself included in a humble way. In answer to inquiries of the hon. Member for the Central division of Sheffield and his hon. friend the Member for the Brightside division as to why there was no Supplementary Estimate in order to expedite the giving out of certain contracts which, so far as Sheffield was concerned, would be almost entirely connected with armour-plating. The only part of the programme not contracted for was armour for the two armoured ships in the 1908–1909 programme. He was afraid the Government could not bring in a Supplementary Estimate; he did not think the first function of the Admiralty was to give out work whether it wanted it or not for the sake of keeping men employed.

Mr. JAMES HOPE pointed out that it would have to be given out next year, and therefore would not cost any more and would keep the staffs from being disbanded.

*Dr. MACNAMARA said they could not give that out at present. They had not the actual design for the ships, and the giving out of the armour-plate followed all these things. As a matter of fact, the £1,250,000 on the Estimates for armour was distributed equally among five firms, and three of these were Sheffield firms. So as a matter of fact there was £750,000 worth of armour that Sheffield had contracted for.

Mr. WALTERS asked whether it was not a fact that, before the armour was made, private firms, at the request of the Government, had fitted their factories with plant and machinery for the manufacture of armour, to meet the Government needs.

*Dr. MACNAMARA said that might be so; he was not speaking of favours but of facts. The hon. Member for Fareham had said quite rightly that there were critics among the Naval experts who questioned the big ship policy.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: How do you define naval experts?

*Dr. MACNAMARA: He would not attempt to define a naval expert; at any rate he was certainly not one himself; but this was the fact, that after most careful examination, after struggling with the problem, other naval Powers had copied our big ship policy. The "Dreadnought's" displacement was 17,900 tons. France, according to the published return, was going in for six "Mirabeaus" of 18,000 tons; Germany for five "Ersatz Wurttembergs," 17,960 tons; the United States, one "Delaware" and "N. Dakota," 20,000 tons; Japan, one "Satsuma," 19,350 tons, one "Aki," 19,800 tons, and two to be laid down of 20,800 tons. He did not follow his hon. friend the Member for Bradford in his theory of "coastal automobile steel forts," and upon the question of the part to be played in naval engagements of the future by submarines, floating mines, and destroyers; they were matters upon which he could not express an opinion. It had been suggested that in comparisons "Dreadnoughts," and nothing but "Dreadnoughts," were to be counted, no matter what had gone before. ["No, no."] If that was not so, he could not understand many of the criticisms. It was no question of neck and neck competition with other Powers; in "Dreadnought," plus vessels other than "Dreadnoughts," it could be shown we were ahead, easily ahead, and likely so to remain. Apparently the idea was that from the moment they had the "Dreadnoughts" everything else was to be regarded as obsolete.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE said that surely the hon. Gentleman should know that they had stated nothing of the kind. What they had said was that we should have ample superiority in "Dreadnoughts," and that if there should be later improvements on this type then we must be superior in vessels of the newer type also. To say that was not to argue that vessels of previous types were to be held as of no account.

*Dr. MACNAMARA said he was very glad to hear that, because it was a matter which affected previous types, some of which were very useful. There were the "Lord Nelson" and the "Agamemnon," for example, which were very useful vessels. He had heard naval experts say that they would rather fight in vessels of the "Lord Nelson" and "Agamemnon," type A; the "King Edward VII." class, which were formidable vessels in regard to armament, speed, and displacement, were not to be sneezed at. He wanted to make this quite clear, for he had thought the idea was that they were to have nothing in the comparison but "Dreadnoughts." But apparently that was abandoned by the hon. Member opposite. Let him look into the question of comparative strengths, in relation to the fascinating study of the two-Power standard. Everybody had his theory as to what constituted the unit in the two-Power standard, but they never found anybody who could agree as to how they were going to arrive at it. He would take the German view of the life of an armoured vessel as not more than twenty years, and would take the most severe view by striking off every one of our vessels that was twenty years of age. To-day we had the "Dreadnought" and forty other big ships not more than twenty years old, making forty-one; Germany had twenty, France fifteen, and the States twenty-two. He took the least invidious combination, that of France and Germany, which together had thirty-five; Great Britain had forty-one. Then we had a large reserve of ships over the twenty years limit with which no other nation's reserve could possibly compare. A year hence we should have four "Dreadnoughts," ("Dreadnought," "Bellerophon," "Temeraire," and "Superb,") and forty others, not including the "Inflexible," the "Invincible," and "Indomitable" cruisers, each with eight 12-inch guns. These were really first class battleship cruisers; but he would leave rhem out. This day twelve months then we should have forty-four, as against Germany's twenty, France fifteen, and the States twenty-two—France and Germany thirty-five, Great Britain forty-four. This day two years we should have seven "Dreadnoughts" ("Dreadnought," "Bellerophon," "Temeraire," "Superb," "St. Vincent," "Collingwood," and "Vanguard,") and forty others; Germany twenty-four, France fifteen, the States twenty-five; France and Germany thirty-nine, Great Britain forty-seven. Three years hence the figures would be Great Britain forty-eight, Germany twenty-seven, France nineteen, the States twenty-six; France and Germany forty-six, Great Britain forty-eight. Then he took four years hence. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to forget that the German programme was laid down in three Bills, 1900, 1906, and 1908, full and complete, while our programme was only up to 31st March, 1909. These comparisons were instituted and they were told to go home and be very frightened at the serious outlook.

MR. WYNDHAM: Not to be frightened.

*DR. MACNAMARA: I am doing all I can to grasp the circumstances; I am doing my best.

MR. WYNDHAM was understood to say that the argument was, and he did not think it would be denied, that superiority would be stated year by year in "Dreadnoughts." These would naturally cost a great deal of money, and would involve the construction of other things which would cost a great deal of money, that would have to come on the Estimates, and therefore it would be wise to make some provision now in respect of those big vessels.

*DR. MACNAMARA said that the right hon. Gentleman knew very well that the German scheme went down to 1920, while we were dealing with a scheme that went to 31st March, 1909. The two were not comparable. This day four years we should have eight "Dreadnoughts," or forty-eight big ships in all, plus any that would come in under the 1909-10 programme to be delivered in 1912; Germany would have thirty; France twenty-one; and the States twenty-eight. Our position then would be forty-eight plus the first-class vessels under 1909–10 programme, as against France and Germany combined with fifty-one. His hon. friend the Member for Lanarkshire seemed very anxious about armoured cruisers and smaller cruisers. Now armoured cruisers to-day, including the "Inflexible," numbered thirty-five; Germany had eight; France, nineteen; the States fifteen. This day twelve months we should have three "Inflexibles" and others making thirty-eight; Germany eight; France twenty; the States, fifteen. In two years, the numbers would be Great Britain thirty-eight; Germany nine; France twenty-one; the States fifteen. In three years we should have four "Inflexibles" and others, making thirty-nine; Germany eleven, France, twenty-two, the States fifteen. In four years Great Britain thirty-nine, plus any laid down in 1909–10; Germany twelve; France twenty-two; the States fifteen. The position then in regard to armoured cruisers would be one of substantial superiority for this country and by no means one of neck-and-neck competition. He would now deal with unarmoured cruisers. He had never heard Naval experts support the proposition of the hon. Member for Lanark that for every battleship there should be two cruisers.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said that what he had stated was that, taking the numbers roughly, and considering all the subsidiary services, and all the circumstances, they would want two cruisers for one battleship.

*DR. MACNAMARA: Then it was not a case of two cruisers to each individual battleship, but that they needed two cruisers to one battleship to meet the general requirements of the case. He had never heard that stated before. But take the most severe view as to unarmoured cruisers (not including scouts) confining them to those exceeding 20 knots an hour and not more than fifteen years old, and how did we stand?

He left out the States for purposes of comparison, for there they were few in number. To-day we had twenty-five, Germany twenty-two; France eleven. This day twelve months we would have twenty-five; Germany twenty-five; and France eleven. In 1910, we should have twenty-five; Germany twenty-seven; and France eleven. This day three years the numbers would be Great Britain thirty-one, Germany twenty-nine, France eleven. In 1912 Great Britain would have thirty-one plus the additions of 1909–10; Germany thirty-one, and France eleven. He was rather amazed to hear the anxiety about destroyers. In the 1904–5 Estimates the late Government put in thirteen destroyers, but did not proceed with them. They left them for their successors to build, and as far as he could see they were building them. He need not go into the question of destroyers, because the same sort of comparison held good whether he took ten or twelve years life. With regard to shipbuilding generally, the Government policy was quite clearly stated by the late First Lord when he introduced these very Estimates in another place. This was what he said—

> "This programme suffices for 1908–9; whether, and to what extent it may be necessary to enlarge it next year, or in future years, must depend upon the additions made to their naval force by foreign Powers. His Majesty's Government have every intention of maintaining the standard of the British Navy which has hitherto been deemed necessary for the safeguarding of our national and Imperial interests."

That was their position then, and it was their position now. The present Prime Minister on 2nd March this year said—

> "Our naval position is at this moment, as I believe, as the Government believe, one of unassailable supremacy, and such it must remain. The command of the sea, however important and however desirable it may be to other Powers, is to us a matter of life and death. We must safeguard it, not against imaginary dangers, not against bogeys and spectres and ghosts, but we must safeguard it against all contingencies that can reasonably enter into the calculations of statesmen. For that purpose we believe it to be our duty to maintain our standard of relative naval strength."

That was their position then, and it was their position now, and clearly they were bound to keep the Navy at all times in what the Prime Minister called a position of "unassailable supremacy," and that need was emphasised by the Report only a few days ago on the proposal for a national guarantee for war risks on shipping. The Members, after having examined the proposition, fell back upon this—

> "We are therefore unable to recommend the adoption of any form of national guarantee against the war risks of shipping and maritime trade except that which is provided by the maintenance of a powerful Navy."

Mr. Block, the proposer of the Hague Conference, in a book on the whole question made this remarkable comment—

> "In a very different position is England. Her fundamental interests demand that she shall remain mistress of the seas, everywhere and against every possible enemy, preserving from all dangers not only the British Islands but her maritime trade, her immense Colonies in all quarters of the globe, and those communications by which the riches of the Old and New Worlds are exchanged to her advantage, and from which depend the ebb and flow of her social life. Mistress of the seas, England can be at rest, both as concerns herself and as concerns her Colonies. For her the mastery of the seas is no empty word, and she has every good reason to devote all her resources to the strengthening of her Fleet."

As far as he was concerned he felt that though the burden was grievous to be borne and was rapidly growing in its proportions, yet it could only be diminished if diminished consistently with the security of the Empire. He did not mind confessing that in the three months he had been studying this expenditure he had been frequently filled with despair at the dreadful rivalry which civilised people were inflicting upon themselves. Everything was growing bigger and more expensive and was rapidly becoming more obsolescent and obsolete. Fifty years ago the rough standard of cost of a ship was about £1,000 a gun. A 120-gun battleship would cost £120,000, and a 36-gun frigate cost roughly £36,000. Ten years ago the first-class battleship "Cæsar" cost £942,000. The "Dreadnought" cost £1,800,000. Ten years ago the cruiser "Niobe" cost £575,000. The "Shannon" cost £1,400,000. Ten years ago the destroyer "Gipsy" cost £56,700. The "Mohawk" cost £144,000. Five years ago Submarine No. 1 cost £38,000; Submarine C1 cost £48,000. And as he had said not only was everything growing more costly; it more rapidly became obsolete. The "Victory" was forty years old when she fought at Trafalgar and she went into another commission after that. Last year they put on the sale list and sold a battleship which was completed in 1891. She cost £791,120, and £96,184 had been spent on repairs on her. She was sold for £26,600. In the last five years, omitting the "Montagu," they had sold battleships which had cost, including repairs, £8,500,000, for just over £200,000. Ten years ago our total net actual estimates were twenty-six and a half millions. They were now thirty-two and one-third millions. Germany's estimates ten years ago were six and three-fifth millions. Now they were sixteen and three-fifth millions. Ten years ago the States' estimates were nine and four-fifth millions. Now they were twenty-five and four-fifth millions. He did not see where it was all going to end. When the first Hague Conference was about to assemble, the late Lord Salisbury said—

> "Unfortunately it is true that there has been a constant tendency on the part of almost every nation to increase its armed forces and to add to an already vast expenditure on appliances of war. Her Majesty's Government will gladly co-operate in the proposed effort to provide a remedy for this evil Her Majesty's Government will gladly accept the invitation which Count Mouravieff contemplates for a conference to discuss the best method of attaining the two objects specified in His Excellency's note, viz., the diminution of armaments by land and sea and the prevention of armed conflicts by pacific diplomatic procedure."

Mr. Goschen in dealing with the Czar's memorandum made this statement—

> "We have been compelled to increase our expenditure as other nations have increased theirs, not taking the lead, not pressing on more than they. As they have increased, so we have increased. I have now to state on behalf of Her Majesty's Government that similarly, if the other great naval Powers should be prepared to diminish their programme of shipbuilding we should be prepared on our side to meet such a procedure by modifying ours. The difficulties of adjustment are no doubt immense but our desire that the Conference should succeed in lightening the tremendous burdens which now weigh down all European nations is sincere. But if Europe comes to no agreement, and if the hopes entertained by the Czar should not be realised, the programme which I have submitted to the House must stand."

He was bound to say that, deplore the fact as he might, he did not see what other than that these statesmen could have said. And after all, heavy as the costs were, and rapidly as they had increased, battles cost more than battleships, and the people of the country had to recognise that, and that war indemnities might very well be naval Estimates multiplied many fold. Therefore, deplore this as he might, he felt that it was upon the unimpaired strength of the British Navy that depended not only their trade and their Empire, and the happiness and safety of our people at home and abroad, but, as he thought, the very foundations of the peace of the world.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) congratulated the hon. Gentlemen on his speech, which, if it expressed the sentiments of the Government, did them credit. If they carried out the principle that they would at all costs keep the supremacy of the sea they would have nothing but support from the Opposition. He was afraid their difficulties at present arose a great deal from the present Government, when they first came into power, not following on in continuity the policy of the late Government. Shortly before the late Government left office, there was a very important memorandum by Lord Cawdor, in which it was stated that the minimum which we should lay down of big ships every year was four. Unfortunately, however, the Government two years ago dropped from four to three, and now they had dropped to two. Germany had publicly challenged our supremacy of the sea, and, therefore, at all costs we must be prepared to meet any contingency. There were differences of opinion with regard to keeping up the two-Power standard with regard to "Dreadnoughts" alone. Sir William White and other gentlemen had expressed their doubts as to whether it was good policy on our part to put so many eggs into one big basket, whether it was not running a risk which the country ought not to run, and whether they would not do better by building battleships of a somewhat smaller calibre like the "King Edward VII." class. As to the question of keeping up a two-Power standard he believed that we ought to keep on the safe side. It might involve a little more money, but until the question of what was the two-Power standard was settled we ought to be on the safe side, and be superior in the two-Power standard of the "Dreadnought" class. How did we stand in regard to that? In the spring of 1911 the calculation was that Great Britain would have eight of these big ships, Germany seven, and the United States four. Therefore we should be in an inferior position by eight to eleven ships. He desired to draw the attention of the Government to the further point that almost all the big type ships being built by foreign Powers were going to be superior to the "Dreadnought" on the question of broadside firing. The "Dreadnought" could fire eight big guns on broadsides while the two big United States ships which would be completed in 1911 would have five barbettes, and would be able to fire ten guns at the same time from the broadside. The three Brazilian and Japanese ships had their barbettes so arranged that they could fire ten guns broadside at the same time. As to Germany, he did not know if the Government knew exactly what kind of ships that country was laying down as regarded armaments. He understood the barbettes were to be arranged in diamond shape so that they would be able to fire ten eleven-inch guns all round at any angle. Then it was said that in the Japanese ships there were to be fourteen twelve-inch guns, which would make them 40 per cent. more powerful than the "Dreadnought" itself. If these figures were correct they put out of court the measurement taken by the Government as the two-Power standard. As to what had been said by his colleagues from Sheffield regarding the giving out of orders for work he desired to say that the question was a very serious one. He was quite sure the Admiralty were doing their best for the taxpayers of the country, but at the same time they ought to consider the workpeople and the chances of their being thrown out of employment. He asked that the Government should endeavour to place the orders more evenly and not in the spasmodic way in which at present obtained. Orders were given in the early part of the present year which would give employment for several months, but many of them were nearly finished, and they were afraid of a period of distress following which would be very difficult to meet. Therefore, they asked the Government to push on with the work. The hon. Member who spoke for the Admiralty had said they had not yet settled their plans for the two big ships to be built this year. Why not? The programme was decided upon last year and now they were told that the plans were not settled.

Dr. MACNAMARA: I said those ships were not laid down yet.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS said he understood the hon. Member to say that the design of the ships had not been made. He thought the Admiralty should anticipate matters by placing the orders so as to obviate the distress which would otherwise arise amongst certain people through no fault of their own. Those works had been placed there specially for Government work at the request of successive Admiralty Boards. He remembered one First Lord of the Admiralty, when armour was scarce, pressing them to lay out money in order to furnish the armour he required. The question of the supremacy of the Navy was most import to safeguard the food supplies of the country, because 75 per cent. of our flour supply and 40 per cent. of our meat came from abroad. The tonnage of the mercantile marine was half that of the whole world and the £32,000,000 spent upon the Navy amounted to an insurance of only about 2 per cent. upon it. The Prime Minister once said—

> "The two-Power standard represents the minimum of safety. It is our best form of insurance. The country expends £30,000,000 in connection with the Navy, which is a large sum, but I look upon it as the premium we pay to secure the ultimate safety not only of our commerce but the safety of our shores and the very existence of our population in the face of a danger which we all hope may be remote, but against which it is our business to guard."

His only hope was that the Admiralty would see that at the very first opportunity the Prime Minister carried out his promise, and he trusted that the money would be forthcoming for a strong naval programme next year.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said the importation of the larger part of our food supplies had been used as a justification for having a strong Navy. He desired to see peace maintained, but admitted that so long as we remained in the position we were in at the present moment in regard to the food supplies there might be some justification for increasing the strength of the Navy. Sixty years ago we imported one-fourth of our food supplies, but the percentage at the present moment was 75 per cent., and therefore it was necessary for us to keep the command of the seas. We wanted to do all we could to increase our home food production, and then we should be able to economise in regard to the Navy. He did not want to see this everlasting demand year after year for a larger navy, because so long as that demand was made we should never get other countries to economise in regard to their Navy. He thought this was a very important aspect of the question, which ought to receive serious consideration at the hands of all hon. Members who desired to see economy adopted. If we lost command of the seas to-morrow we had not sufficient food to keep us longer than a month, therefore, he would like to urge that some attempt should be made to increase our sources of food production. He did not assert that we ought not to have an efficient Navy. With our Colonies all over the world and being dependent upon our food supplies from abroad, we must have an efficient Navy, but to continue to neglect home cultivation of our food supplies, and then use that as an argument for an ever increasing Navy, he thought, was most unbusinesslike and not right. He appealed to the Opposition to give greater consideration to this aspect of the question. With regard to the employees in the dockyards some of the promises made last year had not been fulfilled. There were five different sets of employees in the dockyards, namely, the riveters, platers, holders-up, sailmakers, and hammermen. It was far more difficult to get some slight concession to these men than to get £20,000 for horse-breeding or an additional £1,000,000 for the Navy. He hoped the present First Lord of the Admiralty would make a new departure and do something to remove the grievances under which these men suffered. The dockyard riveters received 6s. 9d. a week less than the men in private yards. That ought not to be. If they were doing skilled men's work they should receive skilled men's wages. The platers were receiving 10s. per week less. The holders-up were receiving 3s. 3d. a week less, and the riveters 6s. 9d. per week less in Government dockyards than in private yards. The Government two years ago conceded £60,000 to be paid in additional wages to the dockyard workers, and they also conceded the right of the workers to direct representation in regard to grievances. He expressed his appreciation of what the Government had done in these matters, but he and his friends wanted them to go a little further and try to remove some of the particular defects to which he now called attention. The sailmakers had asked that their wages should be increased to 35s. a week and the demand had been refused. He could not see the justification for that refusal. He had heard of a case where the work in connection with two ships was partly done at Sheerness. The ships were taken to Scotland where the work was done by men receiving 36s. a week. If the Government could pay 36s. a week to the men who did the work in Scotland he could not see why they could not give 35s. a week to the men working at the Government dockyards. The men who were engaged at galvanising work also asked for 30s. a week. An inspector reported that this was dangerous and unhealthy work, and recommended tha the workmen should not take their food in the place where they worked, and that special clothing should be worn. In consequence of the dangerous nature of the work the men received 2s. extra pay. The men outside who were engaged in similar work received about £2 a week, and in face of this he considered the demand for 30s. per week very reasonable It was not too much to ask that the men in the Government employment should receive the same wages as the men in the service of private employers. He did not wish to be misunderstood in regard to the demands he was making. If the men were asking more wages than other employers were paying, there might be some justification for refusing the demand, but all that was asked was that the same wages should be paid. He moved to reduce the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £2,936,100 be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Summerbell.*)

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, who had replied for the Government, had not dealt with the questions raised by his hon. friends who were associated with him in the representation of Sheffield. The hon. Gentleman had really given the go-by to those questions. His answer amounted to this, that Sheffield got three-fifths of the only orders it was possible to give in this direction. He himself maintained that that answer in no way dealt with the complaint made. Hon. Members had not asserted that Sheffield had not got its proper proportion; they said the total of which that proportion was a part, was not sufficiently great. The proportion now given was not such as to keep employed in anything approaching their capacity the great works which had been made, built, organised, and extended in successive years, almost entirely at Government invitation and in Government interests. It followed that this question of the equal distribution of orders in one year as compared with another was largely a question of State interest. He was sure the hon. Gentleman, although he said Sheffield got three-fifths proportion, did not wish to treat the demand cynically. It was a matter of very unfair suffering and they were by no means satisfied with the answer. The suffering could to some extent be avoided. He hoped that in future years they would not arrive at such a position that the Government would say they could not introduce any Supplementary Estimate, because even if the designs had been ready the keels were not ready. He thought if a more consistent and better organised policy had prevailed with a view to avoiding the present unnecessary suffering, the Government would have found itself in a better position to provide against the complaint which had been made, but not met.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester) said that, though he was not a dockyard Member, he represented a constituency near a dockyard, and he was naturally very much interested in the question of dockyard employment. While he wished to pay his tribute to the Admiralty for the care and consideration with which they had dealt with the grievances brought to their notice, and while he believed they were doing their utmost to concede the points on which a satisfactory case had been made out, there appeared to him one matter of more than passing interest which called for comment. It was a matter of absolutely national concern, and one of particular importance at the present time. He referred to the question of the re-opening of the establishments. It was a matter of concern to the Royal dockyards, and he believed that it was one in which all the employees there were intensely interested. He knew that the argument was used that the non-effective Vote was so heavy that it required careful consideration before any additional burden was put upon it. He wanted to emphasise the fact that the non-effective Vote was composed largely of what was nothing more nor less than deferred pay. The hired men were receiving better wages than the established men, and that which was kept from the established men was paid in the shape of pensions. It seemed to him that this was a matter of paramount importance, because at the nation's expense young fellows were being apprenticed in the Royal dockyards. They learned the shipbuilding secrets which were essential to make vessels useful, and yet after they had served their appenticeship and vast sums of money had been spent in that direction, a positive premium was put on their going to private yards. The owners of private yards were naturally glad to avail themselves of the services of men who had been apprenticed in the Royal dockyards because they had been so well skilled in their work. One of the reasons why he pleaded for the re-opening of the establishments was that, after all, the men who were established had a greater stake in the country and were unwilling to lose their employment. They were to a large extent the backbone of the dockyards. They felt greater security of tenure in their employment, and, therefore, they took a greater interest in the local concerns. There were a vast number of men who by careful thrift had bought their own houses and they were now living in them. Then, again, in regard to apprentices he did not think it could be denied that the establishment was held out as a positive inducement to them to enter the service. It might be said that the Admiralty were now in a position to dictate their own terms for the opening and closing of establishments. He agreed that it was so in time of peace, but it was possible to conceive a time when the Admiralty would not be in such an advantageous position, in time of national emergency and in time of war. The men who would then be wanted might make demands which otherwise they would not insist upon. He thought it was practically admitted that strikes were almost unknown in the Government dockyards. That was due to the fact that the established men recognised that they had very much less cause for throwing up their work and following some of their confreres into a strike. Certainly the establishment men had a leavening influence upon the hired men next to whom they worked. They had no need of a better illustration of the danger of this matter than that presented at the Devonport dockyard last week. Last Monday a strike occurred which affected the work on the "Temeraire" battleship, as the result of the engineers' strikes in the North-Eastern district of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, when forty-five engine-fitters, four coppersmiths, and two blacksmiths on the "Temeraire" were called out. The strike was also likely to affect the same firms of contractors employed on the battleship "Collingwood," and there was a possibility of a delay taking place in the completion of those battleships. It must be remembered that engineering and shipbuilding were progressive sciences, and the Admiralty would admit that the life of a vessel was not a fixed factor. Any delay caused in building ought therefore to be taken out of the life of a battleship as an effective weapon. Strikes were almost unknown in the Royal dockyards, and that said very much for the discipline of the men and the character of the general supervision; but he hoped that the Admiralty would not take advantage of their immunity in that respect in the past; and in view of the possibility of a time of national emergency when there might be a very great temptation to hired men to dictate terms, he trusted that the Admiralty would reconsider this question of the re-opening of the establishment. They had been told that the matter had been referred to the Cabinet and the Board of Admiralty, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman, whom they were all glad to see as the representative of the Admiralty—he was of opinion that the First Lord should always be in this House rather than in another place— would be able to give some assurance that the establishment would be re-opened, to the advantage of the nation as a whole. This question was also of much importance to all the Royal dockyards. He would like to emphasise the natural and geographical advantages of Chatham dockyard. Objection was taken to it on account of the long approach by the River Medway. If only the Admiralty would spend as much money for dredging the Medway as on dredging at Devonport, Chatham would continue to be one of the finest dockyards in the country. He had heard that the sinking of a barge would block——

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not in order in discussing dockyards. He must keep to the Items on the Vote. Chatham may be a good dockyard or not; but that has nothing to do with the shipbuilding Vote.

MR. E. H. LAMB said he would renew his request to the hon. Gentleman to deal in his reply with the re-opening of this establishment.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said he would not attempt to follow hon. Gentlemen who had discussed this Vote with an imaginative power which would have done credit to the best naval novelists of the day, but he strongly deprecated the proposal the hon. Member for Central Bradford had made for the appointment of a Committee of this House to overlook naval expenditure. That was the paramount duty of the Government, and if the Government did not see that the money voted by the House was properly expended it should cease to be a Government. The appointment of such a Committee would weaken the responsibility of the Government. As with the hon. Members on the Labour benches, the party to which he belonged professed their desire for perfect peace if that was possible of attainment, but the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield was greatly concerned that there had not been sufficient expenditure on munitions of war in his own constituency. That showed some discrepancy between altruistic aspirations and actual facts. He would not consider the ethical standards of the expenditure on munitions of war, and he did protest against the absurd proposition that expenditure on the Army and Navy was of an unproductive character. The united voice of the Labour Party said that they should reduce the expenditure on the Army and Navy because it was unproductive, but every individual voice on those benches was raised to complain when any reduction of that expenditure in their constituencies was effected. These two positions were utterly incompatible. Expenditure on the Navy and Army was not only the most productive of all expenditure because it insured the maintenance of peace and continuance of industries; but it was actually in itself productive immediately and directly, as well as indirectly and finally. He hoped after the experience they had had that day they had heard the last of the contention that naval and military expenditure was unproductive. He took it that it would be in order on the Shipbuilding Vote to ask why the Admiralty did not provide for a battleship for the China station, as, in his opinion, one ought to be provided, as the other great naval Powers had done.

*The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman will not be in order in dealing with the distribution of the Fleet. He might be in order if he is able to say that the Fleet is not sufficiently large to reinforce the squadron on the China station.

*Mr. REES said he wished to submit that it was altogether out of the question that because this country had a great and valuable ally in Eastern seas, we should leave that ally to do the work which we formerly did ourselves. He found that other great Western Powers had battleships in those seas; and he submitted that we should have some ship in those seas which would better represent the power and might of the British Navy than the "Highflyer," which was an inferior ship, in the East Indies. He trusted that he would be in order when he said that when the Admiralty were scrapping so many ships as they did they should have provided in some way that our flag should be flown in places where it was absolutely necessary it should float in order to maintain our prestige, which, after all, was a most valuable possession, from the most mercenary point of view, and made it possible to reduce actual garrisons.

Mr. MADDISON (Burnley) asked the Chairman if the hon. Member was not discussing the distribution of the Fleet.

*The CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Member was most ingenious in trying to evade his ruling. The point which the hon. Member was raising came under Vote 12.

*Mr. REES said that his right hon. friend the Member for Dover had raised the point.

*The CHAIRMAN said it was a different thing mentioning a point casually in a speech and discussing the policy of it. The right hon. Member for Dover was in perfect order.

*Mr. REES submitted that the Admiralty policy should be directed so as to keep a battleship in Eastern and East Indian waters.

*The CHAIRMAN: The policy of the Admiralty comes in under Vote 12.

MR. REES said he would then leave the subject seeing he had not been able to bring it in within the four corners of the Vote before the Committee. He urged that the First Lord in dealing with the Estimates should endeavour to take into consideration the points he had put before him, and which he regretted the rules of the House did not allow him to enlarge upon.

MR. JENKINS (Chatham) said he wished to support the Amendment. The question of dockyard promotion was not a new one. In March, 1906, the late Secretary to the Admiralty on behalf of the Government pledged himself to bring about a reform in the direction he then mentioned, and that the Admiralty would pay wages equal to those paid by private firms in other parts of the country which did Government work. The House was interested and accepted that pledge in good faith. Let him say that it was to the credit of the Admiralty that they had granted an advance of £60,000 a year to the whole of their employees; but that amount was not equal to what they should have provided had their pledge been strictly carried out. In the dockyards there were several grades of labour which did not now receive the trade union rate of wages or the rate paid to those employed in the private yards of the country. He had great pleasure in taking advantage of the facilities afforded by the Admiralty, and when going round the dockyards had met with the greatest courtesy. But in presenting the petition he had to face the fact that the Admiralty had apparently taken the average from the returns of the Board of Trade which were taken from the wages paid all over the country, which was manifestly unfair. That was only a typical case. There were, however, classes of men in the dockyards for whom he pleaded more particularly. He complained that the Admiralty did not treat the skilled labourers fairly. Every man who applied for dockyard work must be physically sound, and must produce the highest credentials; he must be a steady and sober man, and then, after years of application, he received 22s. a week for working on the country's ships. He would never rest satisfied until these men were in receipt of not less than 30s. a week. That might seem at first sight a strong demand. In course of time these men were removed from one grade to another. The skilled workman rose from 22s. to 28s., but by far the greater number received 25s. per week, which was manifestly unfair. They were trained men; a riveter was doing the same work as was done by what was called a boiler-maker outside, and for which the outside man would receive 30s. a week. He would not touch upon the naval programme, as it appeared to him that the Opposition generally were in favour of it, judging from the fact that they had all left the House, but he certainly hoped the Government would adhere to the pledge given two years ago. Having dealt with the wages of the skilled labour he applied to the Admiralty on another ground. These men were sometimes reduced and sent back to what was called the bo'sun's gang and were reduced to 22s. a week, and he asked if they were only sent to the bo'sun's gang for a short time and then put back to their regular work that they should count that time as if they were in their regular work and receive the same pay as before. He also wished to know what the Admiralty's intention was in regard to a further diminution of the established list. He found that in 1907–1908 there were in the dockyards 6,947 men on the established list, and in the list for 1908–1909 there were 6,510, or a reduction of 437. He was pleased to note that there had been an increase of 3,962 men on the hired list, but he asked the Government to consider the question of the established list, because there were a number of men who had been looking forward to the time when they would be established, and who might at any moment be dismissed by a new rule. The establishment of these men should not be difficult, because of the economy in shipbuilding in the dockyard. He had gone into the Estimates and taken out the cost of three ships which were built, one at Newcastle, one at Barrow-in-Furness, and one at Glasgow, and he had taken out the cost of a similar ship built at Pembroke. Each of these ships was 418 feet long and 73¾ feet broad and 8,515 tons. The cost of the three ships built in the private yards was £3,437,228 or an average of £1,145,742 per ship. Each of these ships cost £14,427 more than the "Warrior" cost to build at Pembroke. If that figure were multiplied by three, the total of £43,281 was obtained. Why should that amount go into the hands of the private contractor and the country lose the benefit of it when it might be used to advantage for the extension of work in the dockyards? It might be said that he was an advocate for the extension of work in the dockyards. So he was; when in the dockyard the work could be done, the men paid trade union rates, and even then the cost would be less than in private yards. He was prepared to say that on eight ships built in private yards £250,000 might have been saved to the country if they had been built under the same conditions as was the "Warrior" in the dockyard. He therefore asked the Parliamentary Secretary and the House, if it could be proved that in the dockyards the work could be expedited and done as well as the work could be done in private yards and at less cost, why thousands of pounds worth of machinery should be lying idle in the dockyards? Why should such things be, unless there was something behind it? There were, he understood, six cruisers to be given out, and he appealed to the Parliamentary Secretary to see that these ships were distributed about the dockyards, where there was not sufficient work at the present time.

*Mr. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton) appealed to the First Lord to abolish classification in the director of works' department and to do away with the anomaly which existed between that and the construction department. The Admiralty claimed that they paid the standard rate of wages in the director of works' department, but they did nothing of the kind. The joiners in that department started at 30s. a week and rose in time to 32s., whilst those employed in the constructor's department were paid 33s. 6d. per week. He asked that the joiners in the director of works department should be paid the same wage as the joiners in the construction department. The anomaly existed that men doing the same work, in the same place, and with the same tools, on the same class of articles, were differently paid. The man who made a door for one of the naval hospitals and the mechanic who made a door for the ship, the one requiring no more skill than the other, were differently treated. He submitted that the men employed in this department were entitled to be paid the same wages as the men employed in the construction department. The labourers in the director of works department at present had 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week less than the labourers employed in the construction department. He could not see why that should be so. Of course, they knew the peculiar methods which were adopted in connection with the dockyards. In the Royal dockyards, they had unskilled labourers who made shelves and bins for His Majesty's ships. These unskilled labourers were paid wages varying from 22s. to 28s. a week. He did not wonder, therefore, that the Government were getting work done cheaper at the Royal dockyards than in the private yards where the standard wages were paid for doing this class of work. He hoped that the Government would live up to its promises and its reputation as a model employer of labour. It was not acting exactly as a model employer to put unskilled workmen to do the work of skilled artisans. He wished also to draw attention to the fact that a distinction was drawn in the case of workmen who went to His Majesty's dockyards abroad. Practically speaking they drew the same wages in the dockyards, but if they went abroad the allowance varied from 15s. 2d. for one class of workmen to 21s. for another class of workman. He did not see why there should be this differentiation in the allowance given to workmen going abroad. He thought they ought to be placed on the same level. He had been told that the matter would be considered; still, he desired to draw the attention of the First Lord of the Admiralty to this particular phase of the question. Another point to which he desired to call attention was that skilled workmen had been discharged, and in the course of a week or two had been taken on as unskilled workmen and set to superintend unskilled workmen who were doing work usually done by skilled artisans, and had to see to it that the work was properly carried out, a course which he thought most unfair. He hoped the Admiralty would do their utmost to see that the same class of men in the same yards were paid the same rates of wages. He knew the answer had been that they paid the same rates as in the builders' shops, but the builders would never raise wages so long as the Government paid low rates of wages. They were to a certain extent dominated by the rates of wages paid in the Government dockyards. He therefore strongly appealed to the Government to raise the wages of these men to the level of their mates in other departments. If they did not get a satisfactory reply, he hoped his hon. friend would press his Motion to a division.

MR. MADDISON said he always felt a good deal of sympathy with the representatives of the Admiralty upon these occasions, because they were surrounded by faithful men from dockyard constituencies who all wanted to do, and generally did do, their duty to their constituents. They had, however, to look at the matter from the standpoint of the nation as a whole. His hon. friends representing dockyard constituencies would contribute to that theory. He had been a little amused at the course the discussion had taken. The hon. Member for Sunderland, who represented a division nowhere near a dockyard constituency, had shown a great deal of attention to the employees in the dockyard. If it were disinterested it was very commendable, but, while he believed very much in high motives, he tried to find some reason for what went on in the House, and he had come to the conclusion that the hon. Member for Sunderland was really a very great friend of the private shipbuilder, because he knew very well that under present conditions the private yards were more likely to hold their own than if some of his suggestions were adopted. The hon. Member who had just spoken had very moderately put forward the claims of the men in the various dockyards, and he (Mr. Maddison) was very much interested that the Admiralty should maintain the *status* of crafts in the dockyard. He attached more importance to that than even to wages, and thought that wherever the Admiralty did anything which tended to deteriorate craftsmen they did an injury to the cause of industry generally, and to the dockyards particularly. He had been very sorry that they had had to be troubled in Committee of the House with various complaints. He knew no place less fitted to discuss these details than the House, which as a rule always went wrong on details; and he still held that the Admiralty and the trade union representatives might come closer together and save troubling the Committee with questions on which not 5 per cent. of the Members could possibly have any knowledge. The hon. Member for Chatham was not content with putting forward claims for the workmen; but, as a dockyard representative, he naturally tried to prove that this Construction Vote would be better if it were mainly confined to the Royal dockyards. They had had, however, three speeches which had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the hon. Members that the Royal dockyards were places where low wages prevailed, where the handy man was put in the position of the skilled man, where the labourer was put to supervise practical, skilled work, and where, in fact, those conditions upon which trade unionists constantly insisted were reversed. Notwithstanding that they demonstrated this, they came constantly to the House and told the First Lord of the Admiralty that there ought to be more and more work given where labour conditions were worst and where trade unionism prevailed least. That did not seem to be logical.

MR. JENKINS: I said I was prepared to prove that you could build ships in the Royal dockyards as economically as in private yards and pay trade union rates of wages.

MR. MADDISON said the hon. Member was prophesying. He had a very poor opinion of prophets, ancient and modern, and he did not believe there would have been any of old, if there had been Blue-books. A Blue-book killed prophets. The hon. Member for Chatham and his colleagues, the best of trade unionists, were constantly wanting more and more work given to the Royal dockyards where, according to their own view, lower wages were given and there were worse conditions and the non-observance of that *status* of crafts which appealed to him so much. If they wanted better conditions, then they must reverse their tactics and encourage the Admiralty to give more and more work to private yards where trade unions had a better grip of the employers. Was it true that construction in outside yards was so much dearer than in Royal dockyards? That was the important point. In the first instance, whilst they could always ascertain to a penny what a ship cost in outside yards, there was not a man living who had discovered within a good many thousand pounds what a ship actually cost in the Royal dockyards. The hon. Member had said it was very difficult for a juvenile mind to go through the Naval Estimates, but it was a much more difficult thing to get at these minor matters. Even if they got ships built as cheaply in private yards, the hon. Member would not suggest that they should abandon all the valuable machinery and plant that lay outside dockyards in the case of an emergency. They had to take into account all that enormous reserve power which the shipyards of the country gave the Navy absolutely for nothing. When a contract had been given for a ship and it had been fulfilled, the account between the nation and the contractor had ceased, but it remained true that there could be no more suicidal thing to do than to take all shipbuilding orders into the dockyards. He wanted them to go both to the dockyards and to the private firms, and he thought it would be a very wise thing not to enlarge the area of construction in the dockyards, and to find whatever extra construction they wanted in outside yards. They had listened to the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty with a good deal of genuine satisfaction. They thought they saw in it that sense of all-round responsibility to the nation which they regarded as the highest statesmanship. The hon. Member for the Montgomery district had put forward the proposition that expenditure on armaments was as productive as any other expenditure. It was almost hopeless to discuss with an hon. Member who did not see the economic difference between expenditure on lathes and looms and on battleships, for while it was true that up to a point the economic position was exactly the same, namely, that there was labour expended in the making of a warship and in the making of a loom, the parallel ceased there, because when the battleship was completed they never got a penny return for it. It would be scrapped in ten or fifteen years, while the lathe and the loom went on making reproductive wealth. Therefore they asked the First Lord not to carry this insurance bill to too great an extreme. It was all very well to indulge in a peroration about its being cheaper to keep the peace than to have it broken. They had heard all those things from foreign Ministers and they were very glad the First Lord did not fall into that temptation. What would people think of a business man who was so fond of insurance that he insured up to 50 or 60 per cent. of his expenditure? They wanted the greatest care exercised in this construction vote. They wanted no haste. They wanted every penny considered, for they did not get a penny for this Admiralty Vote but it came from the hard labour of thousands of people, and there was no higher trust than to be the guardians of the nation's money.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) thought he understood the Secretary to the Admiralty to say that the ships which were now manœuvring had been mobilised at a moment's notice. Did that apply to all the ships? He had also told them that everything was getting dearer. But they had saved £1,000,000 a year in three years by using up stores which had been provided by the Unionist Government. If they were redundant they had no business there, and the Admiralty had no business to buy them, and it was surely the business of the Government to have an inquiry into it. It appeared to him, in spite of what the Secretary to the Admiralty had said, that in modern battleships at all events, we were not building up to anything like a two-Power standard. In the winter of 1911 if the present building programmes of Germany and Great Britain were carried out, according to the Prime Minister, Germany would have thirteen battleships of the "Dreadnought" type, and we should have only twelve. From 1905 to 1908 Germany had laid down 225,000 tons of armoured ships, Great Britain only

220,000 and America 112,000, so that it was not even a one-Power standard. This year Germany was laying down four large armoured ships of about 20,000 tons each and was spending on them £1,800,000, whilst we were spending this year only £280,000, less really than a sixth. There was certainly no two-Power standard about that. The case was even worse in ocean-going destroyers under 12 years old, and he thought 12 years was usually taken as the life of a destroyer to be really useful. Germany had forty-eight and Great Britain only thirty-eight, and in those building and projected Great Britain had twenty-five and Germany twenty-four. Many of our torpedo craft could not be effectually used in the North Sea. They were not built for it and had not sufficient coal-carrying capacity. If we were to be able to watch for German exits into the North Sea we must have three torpedo craft of some sort to Germany's one, because the strain of blockading a port was so great that they must be relieved every two or three days. In regard to torpedo craft suitable for the North Sea it appeared very doubtful whether we had even an equal number. In the construction of these destroyers for 1897 to 1907, we had only laid down sixty-four to Germany's seventy-two. We were also very short of medium cruisers of which in the Channel Fleet there were only three to every fourteen battleships. We were so short of these and of torpedo craft that our big battleships and cruisers could not stop out in the North Sea at night if we were at war with Germany. At present the Navy was the only thing we had got. The Auxiliary Forces were to a great extent destroyed and were not likely to be used at all events for a year or two, if ever they were. It certainly appeared to him that the Navy had been sacrificed to a great extent to collect money for social reform. It might be right or wrong, but it appeared to be going on and the expenditure next year would be bound to be heavy. It made one begin to wonder where the money was coming from. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that he was going to find money for social reform by reducing the amount which was being spent upon hideous mechanisms for human slaughter. He thought that unless we kept up our Navy to its proper strength, we should be likely to have a good deal of human slaughter in the future. History proved that no country had succeeded in keeping off war except by being well prepared for war. At the present time we were not safe because we were short of torpedo craft and swift armoured cruisers to do scouting work. They knew that a very large sum of money had to be provided during the next two or three years for various purposes, and if the Navy was to be made sufficiently strong to make this country safe, it was very unfortunate that the First Lord of the Admiralty had not told them how he was going to do it, and where he was going to get the money from.

Sir JOHN BENN (Devonport) said that dockyard Members were getting quite used to the gibes and jeers of the hon. Member for Burnley. They all agreed with what he said about spending money on lathes and looms, but some of them believed that without battleships behind them the lathes and looms would not always have work to keep them going. He was afraid that the First Lord of the Admiralty might be discouraged if they did not say a word or two in regard to the work to which the Government had put their hands. To listen to some of the speeches one would think that the Government had made no attempt to recognise trade union rates of wages in the dockyards, but as a dockyard representative he wished to bear testimony to the excellent work which the Government had done in that direction. The institution of the round-table conference with the men had been one of the best things done in recent years. But notwithstanding this, there were several corners which required looking into. The hon. Member for Burnley had said that since this new system had been set up it was not proper that the House of Commons should be called upon to discuss the details connected with dockyard labour. He asked the First Lord of the Admiralty to give them a pledge that this useful annual inspection of the dockyard wages should continue, and in the course of that inspection he desired that special attention should be paid to some sections of labour which, in his judgment, up to the present had not received that due reward to which they were entitled. It would perhaps be invidious to mention names, but there were some corners which still required attention, and if they were attended to he was sure that in the future they would have little cause to complain. There was one thing which gave the Committee great dissatisfaction, and it was that the greater part of the £60,000 which had been added to the cost of dockyard labour had been largely devoted to the lower ranks of labour. He agreed that the wages of the labourers were not princely, but they compared very favourably with the wages paid for that class of work outside the dockyard. With regard to the abolition of the establishment a feeling had grown up that if the men insisted upon trade union rates of wages they had only a right to enjoy those conditions apart from any question of the establishment, and there had been a suggestion that the establishment should be abolished and trade union rates and conditions set up. He wished to take that opportunity of saying that the men in the dockyards desired to retain the establishment, and he would be glad to have some assurance that the First Lord of the Admiralty was prepared to stand by them on that point. If they got the establishment plus the wages paid outside they would secure an ideal condition of labour. It was unnecessary for him as the junior Member for Devonport to tell the Committee that he believed in building as many ships as possible in the Government dockyards. He had no desire whatever to interfere with private dockyards, but if the Government spent large sums of money setting up costly plant and machinery it was the duty of the Board of Admiralty to see that that plant was properly occupied. When that had been done by all means let the private dockyards have all the work they deserved. With regard to the work done in the Government dockyards they had succeeded in regard to the speed of building and the cost in competing favourably with any of the private dockyards in the country. [Hear, hear.] He was glad to hear that the hon. Member for Chatham agreed with him. He felt that such splendid work had been done to get their dockyards right that he would be sorry if the work in that direction should be discouraged by this contemplated reduction of the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty, more especially under present circumstances. If the annual interview was continued he had no hesitation in saying as a dockyard Member that they had reason to be very grateful and hopeful for the future.

*MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis) said that with regard to the closing remarks of the hon. Member for Devonport he could assure him that the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty was not in the least danger, because it did not arise on this Vote, and as this would probably be their last opportunity for discussing naval matters this session the right hon. Gentleman's salary was safe at least for this year. He totally disagreed with the views of the dockyard Members in regard to the placing of orders for ships, because his view was that the Government dockyards should be kept for repairs. In the past the Admiralty had experienced great inconvenience through ships being built in the Government dockyards when the docks were required for repairs. Not long ago the "Dreadnought" occupied one of the docks at Portsmouth for 150 days during one year and this was the only dock available for large battleships at Portsmouth. The Secretary to the Admiralty had reminded them that the First Lord of the Admiralty and himself had only been three months in office. He thought he might say that both of them had commanded the admiration of the House by showing such a mastery of the details of their work in so short a period. He did not altogether agree with the remarks of the Secretary to the Admiralty in his references to disarmament. The hon. Member had quoted Lord Goschen on this point. They all desired to bring about disarmament, but the conclusion drawn from Lord Goschen's attempt in 1899, and the examples this country had set, was that in every single case the result had been an increased naval programme. Lord Goschen's offer, which was made in 1899, was followed by the German Navy Bill of 1900. The reductions suggested in 1905 were followed by the German Navy Bill of 1906, and our reductions last year were followed by the great German Navy Bill of 1908. The Secretary to the Admiralty had referred in an instructive way to the rising cost of ships. The monster cruiser of to-day cost as much as four "Blenheims," which was the monster cruiser of some twenty years ago. But it was the same with regard to motor-cars and all kinds of machinery. Everybody constantly had to "scrap" their old machinery and put in new plant. He was astonished that the Admiralty jargon had been used again that evening about mobilisation at a moment's notice, because this mobilisation had been discussed weeks and weeks in advance. On the question of loans, he was becoming a convert to the views of the Opposition, and he believed that the Liberal Party, in spite of all the opposition they had shown to loans for Admiralty work, would have to revert to the old policy of loans within a year or two. It was impossible to go on meeting naval expenditure without loans. One-fourth of the German Navy Estimates had been provided for by loan, and he thought we should be justified in meeting that rival expenditure by a resort to loans once more. His hon. friend had pointed out certain omissions in the German Estimates in connection with works, etc., but he did not think he had referred to pensions. Pensions amounted to a very large sum in the British Navy Estimates, but a similar item did not appear in the German Navy Estimates at all. They appeared on the Civil Estimates in Germany. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had referred to the absence of the Fleet from Colonial waters. That had taken place as the result of the concentration of ships in home waters, but there was another side to that statement. We had abandoned the Colonies, and the excuse for that was that we had a great Fleet in the Mediterranean which could reinforce the Colonies in case of need. But we had practically abandoned the Mediterranean, and the result was that this policy could be carried no further. We had now completely concentrated the Fleet in home waters. The time might come, in spite of all their wishes to the contrary, when we might require to send a large force to the Far East, and he thought it was doubtful whether we should be able to do so while at the same time providing against attack from Germany. His hon. friend the Member for Fareham had pointed out that the programme framed in November was to lay down ships fifteen months later. The plans of the "Vanguard" were fixed upon in November, 1906, but it was not laid down till March, 1908. The reason for that was given in the following passage in the First Lord's Memorandum for the year 1902–3—

> "What is required is to know exactly how many ships of each class are wanted and by what dates, and to arrange for their commencement accordingly. It is not always possible to commence ships at the end of the financial year consistently with their completion at the required time, but I am clear that there is often a substantial administrative convenience in doing so. The consideration of new designs, or the improvement of existing designs, is a long and anxious task; and when a decision has been arrived at it takes months before the sketch designs can be worked out in every detail so that the dockyards or contractors can build to them. The preparation of the estimates is such a tax upon the time of the Board during the latter half of the financial year that the earlier portion of the year is clearly indicated as that in which this all-important question can be most conveniently studied. It follows that the consequent labour of working out the designs in detail brings us towards the end of the financial year; and if ships are laid down then there should be no check or delay in their subsequent construction."

That raised a very important question. Owing to their having postponed the building of "Dreadnoughts" or battleships the Admiralty were faced with the prospect of having in accordance with the Prime Minister's declaration to lay down ships earlier in the financial year than usual.

Mr. McKENNA said the ships with which they were at present dealing were on this financial year.

*Mr. BELLAIRS said they had to consider next year for a moment or so, too. He asked his right hon. friend when the designs would be ready for all the armoured ships to be built in 1909, so that they might be laid down in accordance with the Prime Minister's declaration. They did not want to be told early next year when the House met that the designs were not ready though the ships were wanted. They did not want to be put off with a statement of that kind. The First Lord of the Admiralty had said that the programme of 1908 only took into consideration the shipbuilding until the end of 1910. That was not a complete statement. What they did was to lay down by the end of the financial year of 1908 the programme which was to safeguard the position to the end of 1910. Therefore the 1908 programme must be considered as safeguarding the position at the end of 1911, unless they were going to lay down the 1909 programme earlier than usual. They had the declaration of the Secretary to the Admiralty that Germany might have completed by the end of the year 1911 thirteen "Dreadnoughts" while we had only provided under this programme for twelve. That was precisely the question which the Leader of the Opposition raised. Another question was, did the 1908 programme take into consideration the German naval programme? He doubted it, and he would tell the Committee why. On 2nd March, 1908, the Secretary to the Admiralty stated that our programme of 1908 was settled in July, 1907, or some time before the German naval programme had been settled, and he used these significant words—

> "I trust the House appreciates the significance of that declaration."

He wished the House to understand that the 1908 programme which had been framed in July, 1907, did not take into account the increases made by the German Navy Bill of 1908. He thought that was an important point for his right hon. friend's consideration. In July, 1907, the Civil Lord stated that the Admiralty had no information as to any German "Dreadnoughts" having been laid down at all. Now it was known that in that very month a number were laid down. They knew from the First Lord of the Admiralty that four "Dreadnoughts" and two cruisers had been laid down. One was a 15,000 ton cruiser, and it belonged to the 1906 programme and it was a very efficient ship. But he omitted to say that three more "Dreadnoughts" had been ordered by Germany at the beginning of the present month or the end of June. The names of the firms from whom they had been ordered were known. He thought the right hon. Gentleman would have acted more frankly if he had mentioned that they were ordered. The question which had been raised as to the position of Germany at the end of 1911 largely hinged upon that. If they were ordered at the end of June it followed, as would be admitted by anybody who was familiar with the rapidity with which the German shipbuilding yards could cope with their work, that they could have them out by the end of 1911. There was no controversy now on the question that Germany was able to build as quickly as ourselves. The "Defence" which was included in our 1903 programme had not yet started on her trials. He stated in 1906 and 1907 that unless we went in for regular programmes we should inevitably be faced with a large programme in 1908 or 1909, and that was precisely the position which had arisen. When the last Government left office they issued a Memorandum calling for four "Dreadnoughts" every year, and pointing out the benefits of regular programmes. The present Government in their first year reduced that programme by one "Dreadnought"; in their second year they reduced it by another; and this year they had reduced it by two. The upshot as he sincerely believed was that the necessary programme for next year would be six "Dreadnoughts." This inflated programme of "Dreadnoughts" had been caused by the reductions of past years. If we had six "Dreadnoughts" in 1909 we should be let in for an expenditure of £11,000,000, whereas two in 1908 would only have cost £3,500,000. That was a huge fluctuation in expenditure. It was exactly the same in regard to cruisers. We had only laid down one cruiser since 1902–3. Nobody denied that that had let us in for the large programme of six cruisers this year, at a cost of about £2,000,000. It would let us in for another six cruisers next year. As to destroyers we had provided for only twelve in the last four years, not counting the sixteen this year, just at the very moment when the ninety destroyers provided between 1893 and 1896 were falling obsolete. We should be faced with a programme for sixteen destroyers this year at a cost of £2,500,000, and inevitably we should be faced with a programme of twenty-four destroyers next year. He did not know whether his right hon. friend had ever cast his mind over the British programmes of the past twenty years, but if he did so he would find that there had been enormous fluctuations, while the German programmes showed that there had been a constant and steady output. In 1892 we provided for no armoured vessels, and in 1899 fourteen were laid down. There were thirty-six small cruisers laid down in 1888–9, but in the three years 1904–5–6, when the original thirty-six cruisers were scrapped, none at all were laid down. As to destroyers, in the period from 1893 to 1896, ninety were laid down; but within the last four years only twelve had been laid down, just when these destroyers had reached the age-limit of twelve years allowed in Germany. Now that was totally against the Admiralty policy as laid down by the representatives of the Admiralty at various times. The Admiralty never paid attention to the documents issued in past years. Though there was heard a great deal about continuity of policy from the occupants of the front benches, as a matter of fact there had never been a continuity of naval policy. In 1902 the then First Lord issued a Memorandum, in which he stated—

> "I am also of opinion that, when it is possible consistently with the requirements of the Navy, there is a great administrative advantage in a steady and constant, as opposed to a fluctuating, Vote for new construction."

That was the very doctrine he had been preaching; but ever since then they had had anything but a constant, steady policy of new construction. His right hon. friend rather ridiculed the two-to-one Power standard as regarded Germany. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the two-to-one Power standard in its application to France was much older and ranged over a greater period of years than with reference to Germany. His right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary, on 1st March, 1904, said—

> "In 1885 the standard set and maintained by Mr. Gladstone's Government was to lay down two ships for every one laid down by the French Government."

In that period there was also a two-to-one standard of expenditure on material. He found that in 1901–2 we spent £2·01 to £1 spent by Germany; in 1906–7 it was £1·9 to £1; in 1907–8 it was £1·5 to £1; in 1908–9 it was £1·18 to £1. This was accounted for by the fact that since the present Government came into office they had provided for less tonnage than Germany in the programme of corresponding years. Never before in the history of the country had there been a period when we laid down less tonnage than our principal naval rival; and the result would be that we should have an inflated programme in 1909. In 1859 there was a Treasury Committee on Admiralty Estimates, and that Committee compiled elaborate tables showing that for every year from the middle of the eighteenth century we had always maintained the two-to-one strength against France in battleships, and more than two to one in cruisers. His right hon. friend had been specially hard on the hon. Member who had demanded a two-to-one standard in "Dreadnoughts"; but who were the people who taught the country that "Dreadnoughts" made every other class of ship obsolete? It was the principal naval advisers who gave such an opinion to their chiefs, and constantly encouraged the view that any nation which possessed "Dreadnoughts" could afford to disregard fleets of existing types. As regarded the two-to-one standard the Secretary to the Admiralty himself gave away the case entirely. He gave the Committee the figures for three years hence: Eight "Dreadnoughts" and forty battleships, or a total of forty-eight, as against Germany and the United States, with eleven "Dreadnoughts" and forty-two battleships, making in all fifty-three. The policy of the Admiralty had hitherto been a two-Power standard compared with the two strongest navies in the world, with a margin of 10 per cent. and he appealed to the late Civil Lord as to whether this was not the case. Then on that basis instead of forty-eight battleships we should have fifty-eight three years hence; therefore he presumed his right hon. friend was going to have a very extensive programme of battleships next year, to make up the deficiency of ten.

He wanted to have an explicit declaration from the First Lord as to whether the two-Power standard meant a combination of the two strongest foreign naval Powers in the world. They were entitled to such a statement in order to know where they were. If they took the most modern battleships and worked it out by the age-period, so as to include only the battleship, launched or projected after January 1st, 1902, we had twenty-two as against nineteen in the United States Navy, and seventeen in the German Navy; that was twenty-two against thirty-six. The supremacy on which the Treasury bench relied was entirely a supremacy in the older class of battleships built before 1902. These included ships which had no armour on the water line at the bow or stern which might be raked by small guns. Of this older class we maintained twenty-six as against twenty-two in the United States and Germany. But even that did not redeem our position so as to give us anything like a ten per cent. superiority over the two strongest Powers. A great deal had been heard about scrapping obsolete cruisers, but the essence of the cruiser was speed, and to lump in 16-knot cruisers in comparison with other Navies was completely to mislead the Committee. Taking cruisers built since 1900, when there was a rise in speed, the comparison between Great Britain and the United States and Germany was as thirteen to twenty-seven. He included armoured cruisers which would be kept with the fleet and would not be available for duties away from the fleet. We had great supremacy in armoured cruisers but not in the cruisers capable of being used for the defence of commerce. When the First Lord came to deal with destroyers, he included in that category torpedo boats, which were called coastal boats, because they could not reach the coast of Germany at full speed. What was the use of such destroyers for blockading work in German waters? We had eight scouts with destroyer armaments, and he took these as equal to sixteen destroyers. This gave us as compared with Germany ninety-six to eighty-four in destroyers belonging to 1898 programmes onwards, and eighty-four to seventy-two in destroyers belonging to the 1900 and subsequent programmes; but by 1910, when Germany would be in possession of her completed programme of destroyers, all those built previous to the year in which the Navy Bill was introduced would be regarded as obsolete. He would like to know why the British Admiralty should have a lower standard in regard to the age of obsolescence of destroyers than the German Admiralty? That was directly opposed to the policy of the Admiralty which was to scrap vessels when they came to need too many repairs. The country would be led into a colossal bill for repairs if the Admiralty went on tinkering with these destroyers after they were twelve years old. He believed that the programme which this country would have to frame would be six battleships per annum, built in two and-a-half years, six cruisers, built in two years, and twenty-four destroyers. He calculated that that would involve a new construction vote in 1910, of £12,740,000, which would be the highest on record. It would keep the two to one standard against Germany, and the two-Power standard against Germany and the United States. It would recover the two to one standard against Germany in fast cruisers in six years, or in 1914, and the two to one standard in modern destroyers also in six years. There was one other point on which they had heard discussion. The Secretary to the Admiralty had said that there was not a single nation in the world that was not copying the "Dreadnought" design. Now, the essence of that design was that all these ships had big guns, but every nation had supplemented these big guns by 5, 6, and 7 inch guns, while the "Dreadnought" had no small guns except 12-pounders and these of course were no use in a naval battle; while she exposed a far greater superficial area unarmoured than ships had hitherto done. The "Dreadnought" had created a rivalry which would cost this country very dearly. Our ships in 1904 were built on the lines of those of foreign countries, but they were superior to those of the foreign countries, but we could not say now that our "Dreadnoughts" were superior to the battleships built by foreign Powers.

The predecessor of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord, Mr. Edmund Robertson, as he then was, boasted that the provision for new construction was the lowest on record for ten years. Lloyd's return stated that the mercantile shipbuilding of the country was in the most depressed condition it had been in for fourteen years. It would have been wise statesmanship if the Government had anticipated the 1909 programme, and come to the relief of the shipbuilding industry, for they would have been able to place their contracts far cheaper than it was likely they would be able to place them again. It was perhaps too late to appeal to the Government; but there was to be an autumn session, and it would be open to them to say then that they proposed to lay down their new "Dreadnoughts" at the very beginning of the next financial year as well as other necessary vessels.

MR. McKENNA replying first to the question of the Member for Sunderland as to the wages paid to skilled labourers in the dockyards, as compared with the wages paid to riveters, platers, and holders-up in the private yards, recognised the fairness with which the hon. Member had stated the case, but said he hoped he would be able to persuade the hon. Member who raised the question that this was not a suitable occasion on which to move a reduction on that account. These men were not engaged to do the complete work of riveters, platers, and holders-up. They were, as the name employed, labourers who had some skill, but not the complete skill of the trained artisan. They might be doing the rough work of a riveter, plater, or holder-up at various times, but they were not trained in those trades. The hon. Member had argued that the men who did that work should be trained men, but the difficulty in a dock yard was that there was no out trade in the town, and, if there was not employment for the fully skilled men in the dockyard, he could not get employment outside. It was thought better, therefore, to give the rougher work of the riveter, plater, and holder-up to skilled labourers, and to leave to the skilled artisan only that part of the work which only he could do. It was really a question of by which method most constant employment could be maintained in the dockyard. He was rather disposed to think that if the hon. Member's suggestions were carried out a hardship would be inflicted on the skilled artisans. The case of the "Hermione" was new to him and he would certainly enquire into it to see what could be done. A complaint had been made as to the lack of contracts for Sheffield. What was it proposed that the Government should do? Were they to lay down ships not in accordance with national requirements, but in order to be in a position to give armour contracts to Sheffield? No one was more anxious than the Admiralty to spread the armour contracts over the whole country, but it was impossible to do this. The Navy was built according to the requirements of the nation for the time being. The Admiralty built ships in order to secure our safety on the seas, and they could not undertake to lay down a definite number of armoured ships in each year in order to secure a uniformity of supply from Sheffield.

MR. JAMES HOPE said it was admitted that there would be an increase in the building programme next year, and what he suggested was that some of the money to be voted next year should be anticipated so that the armament work could be given out and staffs prevented from being broken up.

MR. McKENNA was not sure whether he appreciated the hon. Member's point, but if he did, he was afraid the Comptroller-General would have something to say with regard to any such anticipation.

MR. JAMES HOPE: I suggested a Supplementary Estimate.

MR. McKENNA: Do I understand that the hon. Gentleman suggests that we should bring in a Supplementary Estimate this year for ships not to be built until next year?

MR. JAMES HOPE said he understood there were two ships authorised to be built, but the designs were not complete. He suggested that the designs should be hastened and a Supplementary Estimate brought in.

MR. McKENNA said the designs were complete, their ships were to be a repeat "St. Vincent" and a repeat "Indomitable." In his opinion the Admiralty ought not to be called upon to increase the shipbuilding programme except in the case of naval needs.

MR. JAMES HOPE suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should put forward the Estimates for next year.

MR. McKENNA thought he could not carry the point further. The question of dockyard establishments was engaging the attention of the Admiralty, and the suggestions that had been made were, in effect, being considered at this moment. He agreed that it was undesirable to fill up our dockyards with shipbuilding instead of leaving them free to carry out repairs. At the same time it was desirable to have a certain number of ships built in the dockyards, and the Admiralty were considering the question whether they should not build some of the new cruisers at Chatham. He could not, however, give a promise on a subject which was under consideration. The hon. Member for King's Lynn had asked as to the preparation to be made next year in order to meet possible contingencies. Nearly every speaker had referred to Germany in relation to our shipbuilding programme. In using any comparison of this kind he was sure that it was not done with any idea of hostilities or of any anticipation that hostilities would occur during the building of this programme or of any future programme. The Admiralty only took a particular programme in order to arrive at a standard for shipbuilding. His hon. friend had attacked the policy of the Government on many grounds, but he thought his argument in one respect was not quite verified. He had told them that the "Dreadnought" was not superior to the ships that had preceded it, such as the "King Edward VII" and the "Lord Nelson," and went on to say that prior to the appearance of the "Dreadnought" this country had an unprecedented superiority over foreign nations. If our ships, prior to the appearance of the "Dreadnought," were superior and we had in those ships an overwhelming superiority, then that superiority was maintained, for the copying by Germany of the building of "Dreadnoughts" would not weaken our relative strength.

*MR. BELLAIRS said that he expressly said that the ships recently built had no superiority over contemporary ships, and that we had lost ground in consequence.

MR. McKENNA said the "Dreadnought" cost a great deal of money, but he thought in proportion to its power we got our money's worth. He would not agree with his hon. friend in at one and the same time condemning the "Dreadnought" and asking them to build more "Dreadnoughts" merely because Germany had built more, whilst admitting we had a great superiority in ships prior to the "Dreadnought." His complaint was that we were very badly off in respect of torpedo-boat destroyers. He had in his hands some figures which he had not earlier in the afternoon, according to which between 1896 and 1908 we launched no less than 165 torpedo-boat destroyers.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Are they all efficient vessels?

MR. McKENNA said they were all efficient vessels. Germany, during the same period, launched ninety-seven. Within seven years, according to the Return, Great Britain launched ninety, and Germany ninety-three. During five years Germany built a great many more torpedo-boat destroyers than we did, but in the last two or three years we had rapidly gained again. As our old ships built in 1896 and onwards had become out of date, the new boats built last year and this year and which we should no doubt continue to build, would maintain for us the ultimate superiority over Germany in this particular class of boat. He could not follow his hon. friend through the whole of his argument. A good deal of it appeared to be directed, not so much against the policy of the Admiralty, as against the distinguished admiral who at the present moment filled the office of First Sea Lord. This hostility to the First Sea Lord biassed him a little and did not enable him to see in quite a fair light what the policy of the Board of Admiralty might be. He was much obliged to the Committee for the reception they had been good enough to give to the proposals of the Government for this year. He hoped the Committee would be satisfied that, although the programme of new construction for the current year was small, the Government were this year spending a great deal of money in completing former programmes. They were actually completing out of the Estimates this year no less than eight battleships of the largest type and no less than four cruisers also of the largest type. They were also completing three other cruisers of very considerable type, and laying down five cruisers of the improved "Boadicea" type and one of the old "Boadicea" type. The actual amount under construction this year was, therefore, enormous, and did not in the least ratify the statement that they were providing for less tonnage this year than Germany.

MR. BELLAIRS: My statement was that during the period of the Liberal Government they have provided for less tonnage than Germany. The tonnage under construction has nothing to do with the present Government. The tonnage under construction has been provided for by the last Government. I am alluding to the tonnage of your programme.

MR. MCKENNA said he did not think that even that statement could be regarded as accurate. The present tonnage under construction, with the exception of the "Lord Nelson," which was not yet finished, had all been the result of the programmes of the present Government.

MR. BELLAIRS: And the "Invincible" class.

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, I agree, and the "Invincible." He had stated, he hoped, enough to show that the Government were fully alive to the necessities of the Navy, and he could assure the Committee that the Government would bear most amply in mind all that was necessary to secure the safety of the country even as far ahead as 1912.

MR. ARTHUR LEE asked if the right hon. Gentleman could hold out any hope to the Committee that they would have an opportunity of considering the new programme at an earlier date of the session than had been the case hitherto.

MR. MCKENNA said he quite appreciated that something might turn next year upon the date at which the ships were laid down. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that the Admiralty, being fully conscious of that fact, would have their plans ready in time to enable them to lay down the ships earlier should it appear to be necessary to do so. He was not in the least sure yet that it would be required to lay them down unduly early. They had to watch what the progress was amongst other Powers, and if they were satisfied that they were required to be laid down earlier than usual the Admiralty would be prepared with their plans to do so.

MR. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth) cordially agreed with his hon. friends the Members for Devonport, Chatham, and Rochester in reference to the question raised by them, and he could add nothing to what they had said. He wished to ask the First Lord whether he could give them a correction or explanation of the statement of the hon. Member for Burnley that the Admiralty could not tell by thousands of pounds what ships cost in the dockyards. That was a very bold statement to make, and if it were true it would reflect discredit upon the Admiralty. Was it not, on the other hand, true that the Admiralty knew exactly what ships cost at the dockyards? He rather thought the hon. Member for Burnley, who did not seem to be any friend of the dockyards, had succeeded in this instance in giving them a gratuitous advertisement.

*MR. SUMMERBELL in asking leave to withdraw his Motion said the right hon. Gentleman would not desire to misrepresent what he had said. They had no desire to do anyone out of employment at all. What they asked was that if these men did skilled work they should have skilled men's wages.

Inasmuch as the right hon. Gentleman had intimated that he would inquire into the other two cases he hoped he would include the joiners and the other three sets of men.

*Mr. GRETTON (Rutland) hoped the First Lord's statement might convey more confidence to the country than it did to Members on that side of the House. The Government, he thought, admitted that they would have seriously to consider next year a very much increased programme of construction. In the programme before the country this year they had taken considerable credit to themselves for the great expenditure they were making on ships which were already in band and for the considerable expenditure which they were making on repairs. In the two last sessions constant criticism had been made that repairs in the Navy had been falling into arrears and considerable effort would have to be made to catch them up. The Government had had to devote a very large sum indeed to construction already in hand, and they took great credit to themselves for the fact that they were proceeding with the repairs which had fallen into arrear, which the ex-Secretary to the Admiralty stated last year he had strongly urged upon them to push forward at a much greater rate in order that the fleet might be maintained in a state of efficiency. Their criticisms had been abundantly justified by Estimates this year. He wanted to deprecate any attempt to turn a Naval debate to Party advantage and he only wished these Navy questions might be placed in the same position as that now happily occupied by foreign policy and be freed from party bias and party feeling, and that both Parties unanimously united to support a policy of economical construction which would ensure the safety of the country and maintain the peace of the world. The country undoubtedly looked with great alarm upon the steady persistent progress which had been made in the construction of new ships abroad. A great deal had been said about the new capital ships which were described as the "Dreadnought" class and some speakers had put forward the opinion that those ships put all previous construction out of account. He did not think any serious critic of Naval affairs would hold that view; but, however great the margin might be now over two Powers, undoubtedly it would be necessary for us to proceed with the construction of ships of the new type on such a scale that we might equal any two Powers combined, as we had done in the case of the old ships which were rapidly becoming absolete. If their hopes were not realised we should fall more and more into arrears and they would eventually find themselves face to face with a panic programme and a heavy loan to make up deficiencies. The Navy was the root of our national existence and any parsimony or cheeseparing upon the service would simply be imperilling the existence of the country. We could best avoid war and the calamities of war by maintaining a policy of ship construction which would guarantee us against any possible aggression. In that way, and that way only could we assure our own safety and maintain peace.

Mr. HUNT asked whether it was not a fact that with the Channel Fleet there were fourteen battleships and only three cruisers for scouting purposes.

Mr. McKENNA said he should be pleased to answer the Question upon Vote 12 which dealt with the distribution of the Fleet.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. BELLAIRS asked whether the designs of the ships would be ready so as to allow any "Dreadnoughts" required to be laid down early in the next financial year?

Mr. McKENNA said they would. The Admiralty were fully alive to the point raised by the hon. Member and the designs would be ready in case of emergency.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. £4,157,000, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, &c.—*Materiel,*

3. £7,220,700, Shipbuilding, Repairs, Maintenance, etc.—Contract Work.

MR. GRETTON said that it appeared from the small sums of money involved that the contracts would not be commenced until late in the financial year. He asked if the First Lord could put them forward so that a large amount of the work could be completed this year.

MR. McKENNA was not sure of the direction in which the hon. Member wished him to vote. Two battleships laid down this year were to be built at Devonport and Portsmouth, and of the five protected cruisers the Admiralty would, after the representations made that evening, consider the question of building one in a dockyard. There would be four protected cruisers on contract, as well as numerous torpedo craft and submarines. It must be remembered that all armament and machinery was built by private contract. Upwards of £7,000,000 was being spent this year on contracts.

MR. GRETTON said the right hon. Gentleman had not grasped his suggestion, which was that the contracts for four cruisers and some torpedo craft should be issued as soon as possible in order that work might be pushed forward. Anything further might be made up by Supplementary Estimates later in the year. He now proposed to withdraw one cruiser from contract. It seemed to him that there was stronger reason now for giving the remainder of the work out to contract without delay than when it was originally proposed in order that employment might be maintained.

MR. McKENNA said the Admiralty determined the number of ships and the times at which they should be laid down on naval considerations alone. It was impossible for the Board of Admiralty to put forward a proposal for the enlargement of their programme in order to find work in a particular dockyard, and the nation would have cause to complain if they were specially taxed for that purpose.

MR. GRETTON said the sooner the contracts were let the better would it be for the nation. It would have the additional advantage of providing employment.

MR. BELLAIRS asked whether the cost—which he understood to be about £240,000—of two destroyers which had been purchased was to be met by a Supplementary Estimate or by a saving on other Votes.

*MR. STANIER (Shropshire, Newport) asked whether these were large up-to-date destroyers.

MR. McKENNA replied that it was anticipated the amount would be found by the latter method. The two boats were up-to-date Destroyers, approximately of the River class, new, and of the very best type.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,286,400, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Victualling and Clothing for the Navy, including the cost of Victualling Establishments at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

MR. ARTHUR LEE said the next Vote was the Victualling Vote, and there were some hon. Members on the Opposition side who were anxious to discuss this Vote. If the right hon. Gentleman got £12,000,000 or £14,000,000 through, he thought he ought to be satisfied.

MR. McKENNA consented to withdraw the Vote.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £258,700, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Medical Services, including the cost of Medical Establishments of Home and Abroad, which will come in

course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909."

MR. JENKINS said he exceedingly regretted that there was an increase on this Vote of £10,000. The Admiralty had given the dockyard workers the right of stating their grievances direct to the Board through their own representatives, but British Jack Tars could only have their grievances brought forward through Members of the House. When these men enlisted in the Navy they were told that hospital accommodation would be free, but much to their regret they found when they had been in hospital for thirty days a portion of their money was deducted from them. In the Army a different state of things existed. No matter what time a soldier was in hospital he received accommodation free. He wished the seamen to be treated in like manner, and that deductions should not be made from their wages.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid this point does not arise on this Vote. It comes on on Vote 1.

MR. JENKINS said he was allowed to speak on the question last year on this Vote.

*THE CHAIRMAN: As I understand this is one of the conditions in regard to their wages. This Vote is merely for the expense of the medical establishments.

MR. McKENNA said the deductions to which the hon. Member referred to were to be found on Vote 1. The Board of Admiralty were at present inquiring into this matter, and he hoped to be able to give a reply upon it when they next discussed Vote 1.

MR. JENKINS said he wished to make an appeal to the Chairman. Seeing that this money was being voted for the upkeep of these particular institutions, was he not in order in speaking on this Vote when, had he chosen, he might have moved the decrease of the Vote?

*THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member would not have been in order in moving to decrease the Vote to discuss the question he was now wanting to raise. That question arose on the Vote for the wages of the men. What was now being discussed was the way the hospitals were conducted and the way in which the men employed in the hospitals were paid.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said he wished to ask a very direct and comprehensive question. What had the Admiralty done to improve the medical service of the Navy; what had they done to improve the hospital service of the Navy? He did not want to go into details, but it was much to be desired that some information should be given as to the medical staff—their quantity, quality, and pay. The hon. Member below the gangway had referred to the desirability of the same working conditions being provided for both the Navy and Army. Had anything really been done to improve both the naval medical and hospital staffs? He rather gathered that nothing had been done.

MR. McKENNA said that the hon. Member opposite had opened rather a large field of inquiry. There had been no particular complaint as to either the medical or the hospital staffs in the Navy. The Board of Admiralty had always endeavoured to improve the hospital service on its administrative side. During the past year no special work had been done except, perhaps, in respect to Malta fever, and proceedings had been taken to discover the cause of that disease.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): That was discovered the year before last.

MR. McKENNA said that the discovery had been verified last year, and he believed that it had been proved to arise from drinking goat's milk. Of course, during last year endeavours had been made to eliminate the fever from Malta and the Mediterranean Fleet, but he could not give the hon. Member more precise details as to the work done by the medical staff. If the hon. Member wanted information on a special subject he would see if it could be got.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said it was obvious that the right hon. Gentleman knew nothing about this Vote. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh," and "Withdraw."] The right hon. Gentleman had said that the cause of Malta fever had been discovered last year, while his hon. friend the Member for St. Andrews Burghs said that that improvement was effected a year and a half ago. He asked whether there had been any increase in the medical staff of the Navy during the last twelve months. Had there been any increase in the number of nurses? Had there been any increase in the number of comforts for sailors suffering from diseases in the naval hospitals? Had there been any special inquiry into the diseases to which sailors were liable? Had anything at all been done this year?

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 167; Noes, 5. (Division List No. 186.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashley, W. W.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.)
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Ess'x, Romf'rd
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Davies, David (Montgmery Co.)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol. S.
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jenkins, J.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Lambert, George
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncastr
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Malley William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Renton, Leslie
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, Sir John H. (Denbighs)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)

Tomkinson, James
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walsh, Stephen
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilkie, Alexander
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Dalrymple, Viscount
Gretton, John
Helmsley, Viscount
Keswick, William
Middlemore, John Throgmorton

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Claude Hay and Major Anstruther-Gray.

Resolutions to be reported.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £13,900, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Martial Law, including the cost of Naval Prisons at Home and Abroad, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

MR. JENKINS appealed to the First Lord of the Admiralty to put lower deck men on the same footing as regards privileges of trial as were enjoyed by officers. He pointed out that whilst martial law was trial by jury and that a captain who lost his ship was tried by a court-martial, the lower deck men could be tried and punished at the whim of the captain. Although he quite agreed that discipline must be maintained, at the same time he believed if a lower deck man was tried by a jury they might not take the harsh view that was taken generally by the captain. He knew of a case of a ship's corporal who was reduced for a very minor offence, with the result that his pay was reduced, and he was subjected to the ridicule of the crew. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see that all should come under the same law.

MR. BELLAIRS asked the First Lord whether he would adhere to the rule invariably followed in the service of holding a court-martial whenever a ship was lost. When a destroyer was lost last year on Malta Breakwater no court-martial was held. When he raised the question in the House last session no answer was given, and when he put down a written Question it was not answered until after the House had risen. That Answer said it was not the invariable practice to hold courts-martial. But the only precedent that could be found to substantiate the view was a case in which a coastguard cutter, and not a warship, was lost.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported upon Thursday; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

SEED POTATOES AND SEED OATS SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.) said the measure was on the lines of many previous Bills of the same character. Its object was to validate loans by the Board of Works to boards of guardians for the purchase of seed potatoes and seed oats for occupiers and cultivators of land in Ireland. He was happy to say that the seed purchased in Scotland and the North of Ireland had been examined by the Local Government Board inspectors before shipment. No complaint whatever had been made as to its quality, and, what was even more important, it had been sown and had produced a crop of the greatest possible promise, which beautified the landscape and excited the warmest hopes, which he trusted would be realised. Some of the potatoes had been dug and eaten, and nothing remained but to legalise what had been done. The amount advanced was £50,000. All previous loans had been scrupulously repaid to the last penny, so they were not engaged in a discussion which need excite the fears of the sternest economist. Anybody, moreover, who knew anything about Ireland might rest perfectly satisfied that the loan in due course would be paid off. He hoped, therefore, the Bill would be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Birrell,*)—put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Birrell.*)

ISLE OF MAN (CUSTOMS DUTIES) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he desired to ask the Prime Minister whether the time had not arrived to remove the necessity of promoting this Bill in each session by proposing legislation to place the Isle of Man under the same law as the rest of the United Kingdom in respect of its finance.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said the Bill was presented annually to meet the wishes of a very ancient institution which he was sure the hon. Member would be the last to wish to abolish or to disregard. It was done to keep up the time-honoured connection between this country and the somewhat small dependency of the Isle of Man that the Bill had to be proposed, and, considering the time occupied by all its stages, he did not think it could be said to interfere with the business of the House.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

BEE PEST (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 16, after the word 'Department,' to insert the words 'charged with agricultural duties and authorised in writing in that behalf by the Department.'"—(*Mr. Joyce.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.

Clause 5:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 35, to leave out subsection 4."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CARLILE pointed out that subsection 3 practically provided that the county council should be the judge in its own cause, in regard to what compensation it should give, or whether it should give any at all. He was under the impression that the hon. Gentleman had given an assurance that that should be amended.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he had looked into the matter and the Government were strictly following precedent in this case.

MR. CARLILE thought it was a very bad precedent.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked whether the hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to adhere so strictly to precedent. Was there nothing in the circumstances of to-day in this particular case to warrant him in departing from precedent and being a little more progressive in this matter?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: No. I see no grounds for any such thing.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

WHALE FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 21, to insert after the words 'Great Britain' the words 'or Ireland.'"—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

MR. CARLILE asked why the cost of a licence for a single steamer was so much in excess, proportionately, of the cost of a licence for three steamers. If a man was rich and had three steamers he paid £200 for a licence; if he could only afford two he paid £150; but the poor man who could only afford to have one steamer had to pay £100 instead of £66 13s. 4d. which was the amount paid by the owner of three steamers. Why did the hon. Gentleman favour the rich capitalist and treat the relatively poor owner in this particularly shabby manner?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the explanation was simple. If a company had three steamers they paid £200, if they had two steamers they paid less, and if they had only one vessel they paid less still.

MR. CARLILE submitted that the hon. Gentleman was trifling with the Committee. That was no explanation at all. If it was a question of tonnage the Committee should be told so, if it was a question of giving the plutocrat preferential treatment they should know it. In this case the poor man had to pay more or go to the wall. He almost felt disposed to divide against the clause. The interests of these poor people ought to be safeguarded.

*SIR SAMUEL SCOTT (Marylebone, W.) said that under Clause 4 of the Scotch Bill, the measure on which this Bill was framed, the conditions were much the same. The reason for the difference in the cost of licences of which his hon. friend complained was that very often some ships had to go a much longer way than others to get their whales; consequently the period during which they fished was shorter and the expenses heavier. They had to pay a certain sum for their licences. Three ships in those parts very often did not catch as many whales as two ships in other parts in the same time. Therefore, he did not think the explanation given by the Government was at all correct.

MR. CARLILE said he was not satisfied with the explanation which had been given by his hon. friend. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had taken no trouble to give any explanation at all. If they would allow a single licence to be taken out at the same price as was fixed for three, then a great many other people might go in for this kind of fishing.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said he could not understand why a man with one boat should pay proportionately more than a man with three boats.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): One man, one boat.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked why the poor man should be penalised. The Government were proposing in this Bill to give a premium to the rich man at the expense of the poor man.

*SIR SAMUEL SCOTT said that at the whaling station on his property it would be impossible to carry on the industry without three steamers, although in the Shetlands they were able to carry on with two steamers. The whales were frequently captured ninety miles from the station and had to be brought that distance to be landed Consequently the fairest way in granting the licences was to strike an average of whales per steamer. That was the principle of the method adopted in Scotland, and was the only proper way for the Government to proceed.

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) asked if the Government could arrange to have a whale of the bottle-nosed variety placed in the tea room.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3:

*Mr. HUGH LAW moved to add at the end of subsection 5 the words "and no holder of a licence or person employed by him shall, during the prohibited period land any whale killed in contravention of this section."

Amendment proposed—

"At end of subsection 5, to insert the words 'and no holder of a licence or person employed by him shall, during the prohibited period land any whale killed in contravention of this section.'"—(*Mr. Hugh Law.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) pointed out that the chief reason why the Secretary for Scotland refused to take any action in regard to trawling was that the Foreign Secretary feared that larger questions of naval policy might arise and foreign Powers might adopt a similar course to our detriment. It should be made clear that in doing this we were preserving our rights. He wished to know whether the Government maintained that this could be enforced against a foreign subject.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL was understood to reply in the negative.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 5 agreed to.

Clause 6:

Lord BALCARRES said that under this clause if a man intended to apply for a licence he must advertise so as to allow an interval of eight days, otherwise he was liable to a fine of not less than £100. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider that provision. The right hon. Gentleman had promised to introduce a proper scheme of classification of offences. The fines should be commensurate with the offences, and to fine a man £100 for a merely trivial and technical offence might mean ruin to him. There were fishermen who thought their industry was suffering through the presence of great whalers. If a bench of magistrates took that utterly unscientific view, they might inflict a heavy penalty for a trivial offence. He hoped the question of introducing a classification of offences would be dealt with in another place.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL agreed with the noble Lord that it might be better to have the offences classified. It would be a difficult matter at that stage to have that done, but he would consider whether it would be possible to give effect to the noble Lord's suggestion.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) supported the suggestion that the offences should be classified. It could be done by rules framed under the authority of the statute, or by a schedule in the Bill itself.

Mr. HUGH LAW hoped that whatever the right hon. Gentleman did in the way of classifying offences the maximum penalty would not be reduced.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES].

Resolution reported, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of the cost of establishing Borstal Institutions in pursuance of any Act of the present session, to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto, and to authorise the payment to societies of any expenses incurred by them under such Act in assisting or supervising persons discharged from a Borstal Institution."

Mr. CLAUDE HAY asked what amount it was proposed to pay to societies under the Resolution and whether the Home Secretary would consider the advisability next year of increasing the amount.

*The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) said the Borstal Association existed in order to promote the welfare of persons discharged from prisons where the Borstal system was in operation. Hitherto the Treasury had granted £1 for every £1 collected by the association in voluntary subscriptions. The Treasury had been asked, in view of the extension of the system of Borstal treatment, to extend the grant, and they had consented to pay in future £2 for every £1 collected by the association. The sum now collected was £500, and, consequently, the Treasury grant was estimated to amount to about £1,000.

Resolution agreed to.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL.

As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. CLAUDE HAY asked whether the House of Commons was to pass a Bill without the Minister in charge of it being present?

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) BILL [Lords].

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

WILD BIRDS BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

ARMY COUNCIL BILL.

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at a quarter before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 14th July, 1908.

NEW PEER.

The Right Hon. Sir Antony MacDonnell, G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., having been created Baron MacDonnell of Swinford in the county of Mayo—Was (in the usual manner), introduced.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Holderness Water.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Margate Corporation Bill.—Reported with Amendments.

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

The Orders made on 25th June last and the 6th instant discharged, and Bill committed for Thursday next.

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill. Reported with Amendments.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—Reported with Amendments, and recommitted to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [H.L.]; Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Doncaster Corporation Bill; Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill; Swinton and Mexbrough Gas Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill; London United Tramways Bill; Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit To-morrow till Two o'clock.

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill. —Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. [No. 147.]

PETITIONS.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Petition in favour of: of the Corporation of the City of Glasgow; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INDIA (RAILWAYS).

Administration Report on the railways in India, for the calendar year 1907.

EXPLOSIONS (EXPLOSION OF GELIGNITE AT ROSLIN, EDINBURGH.)

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the circumstances attending an explosion of gelignite which occurred at the factory of Messrs. Curtis and Harvey, Limited, at Roslin, Edinburgh, on 26th March, 1908.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 13th July, 1908, providing for special grants in aid of certain school boards in Scotland.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND).

Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, for the year 1907. Part II. Salmon Fisheries.

ARMY.

List of exceptions to the Army Regulations as to pay, non-effective pay, and allowances sanctioned during the year 1907–1908.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL.

Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Duke of Devonhire be proposed to the House as a member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Viscount Hutchinson (E. Donoughmore); and that the Duke of Devonshire be Chairman of Committee; read, and agreed to.

ISLE OF MAN (CUSTOMS DUTIES) BILL. [No. 144.]

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL. [No. 145.]

WILD BIRDS BILL. [No. 146.]

Brought from the Commons and read 1^a, and to be printed.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.] NOW CROFTING PARISHES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Reported from the Standing Committee with further Amendments; the Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received To-morrow, and Bill to be printed as amended. [No. 148.]

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

Reported from the Standing Committee without amendment; and to be read 3^a To-morrow.

NEW BILL.

CRAN MEASURES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to legalise the use of cran and quarter cran measures in connection with trading in fresh herrings in England and Wales was presented by the Earl Carrington; read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 149.]

COMPANIES (CONSOLIDATION) BILL [H.L.].

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.].

The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit until further order. [No. 150.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (MERCANTILE CORPORATIONS AND COMPANIES) BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, the excessive increase in both our national and municipal expenditure is a serious menace to the prosperity of the country, and, if continued, must inevitably lead to disastrous results. Our national expenditure in twenty years has risen from £90,000,000 to £121,000,000, an increase of £31,000,000, and, if your Lordships pass the Old-Age Pensions Bill, will receive another huge addition and our municipal expenditure has gone up from £54,000,000 in 1886–87 to £139,000,000, an increase of no less than £84,600,000. So far as municipal expenditure is concerned, the rise may be considered as due, firstly, to the desire for healthier and happier conditions, and of this increase no one complains. It is, however, felt that there has also been much unnecessary and wasteful expenditure owing mainly to two causes. No doubt there are others. The rapid changes in the mayoralty are not conducive to economy. They were comparatively immaterial before the days of municipal trading. But now that so many municipalities carry on great businesses these changes are most unwise. In Germany the burgomasters are appointed for a term of years, which is a much wiser system. The two main causes of extravagance are however, probably, first, that many of the electors pay no rates. The extravagance and waste have been greatest where this is the case. It appears from the London County Council Returns that in Poplar no less than 80 per cent. of the voters are compound householders, who have votes but do not directly pay rates. In West Ham, where also the rates are exceptionally high—they amounted last year to 9s. 8d. in the pound—it is significant that out of some 48,000 hereditaments there are over 34,000 compounders. In London as a whole over one-third of the voters are of this character. I need not, however, enlarge on this, because the evil was clearly pointed out by Lord Onslow, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and other Lords in a recent discussion. Moreover, not only is it the case that a large percentage of voters pay no rates, but a large proportion of the rates are paid by those who have no votes. When the money is spent by one set of people and paid by another, no wonder there is extravagance.

The present Bill is intended to mitigate, in some measure, this latter evil. Resolutions in support of the principle have been passed by the London Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and the Industrial Freedom League. The Bill has been drafted by the Institute of Directors, and, as your Lordships will see by the Memorandum, it is supported by over 1,500 commercial undertakings in all parts of the country. In fact, it has the general support of the commercial community. It is based on the axiom that representation should go with taxation. In Leeds no less than 26 per cent. of the rates are paid by companies which have no vote; in Sheffield 30 per cent., in Birmingham 28 per cent., in Manchester 32 per cent., in Liverpool 32·4 per cent., and in the City of London 50 per cent. I do not think I need occupy your Lordships' time by enlarging on the injustice and danger of such a state of things. Moreover, there is a tendency for this proportion to increase. I trust, therefore, I shall have satisfied your Lordships that there is a strong and almost unanimous feeling on the part of those interested in the joint stock enterprise of this country that in asking for the favourable consideration of this Bill they are only pleading for bare justice.

Now what is the view of the municipalities? At a meeting of the London County Council on 4th February, 1908, the following resolution, on the motion of Mr. Pilditch, seconded by Mr. Felix Cassell, K.C., was carried by a large majority—

> "That it be an instruction to the Local Government Records, and Museums Committee to report as to the prevalence of conditions under which large sections of ratepayers paying rates to considerable amounts are without representation on the various administrative and spending authorities in London, viz., The London County Council, the Metropolitan Borough Councils, and the Boards of Guardians, and are rendered ineligible to sit as members of certain of such bodies, and as to the possibility and best method of redressing such anomalies."

At a meeting of the Court of Common Council, on 27th February, 1908, Mr. Bowles, the Chairman of the County Purposes Committee, said that—

> "It had been arranged to invite representatives of the London County Council, Stock Exchange, and London Chamber of Commerce to attend with a deputation before the President of the Local Government Board, before whom the whole case in favour of voting on behalf of limited liability companies would be laid."

At the autumnal meeting of the Association of Municipal Corporations, in October, 1904, the Town Clerk of Longton called attention to the following resolution passed by the council on 27th November, 1902—

> "That this Council, having regard to the expression of opinion on the part of municipal corporations and other bodies, to the effect that it is just and expedient that the principle of permitting ratepaying companies and incorporated bodies to exercise the right of voting at municipal elections, should be recognised and given effect to by the Legislature."

He referred to the large number of private trading concerns converted into limited companies. These concerns had to contribute to the rates as before, while they had no representation. It was also robbing the local councils of able men. The Town Clerk of Barrow-in-Furness seconded the Motion, which was carried. I hope we shall receive line of argument to be deliberately sustained? I venture to think that the fact that it would only affect a small element of the electorate is scarcely sufficient ground for opposition. I will not follow the noble Lord into his examination of parts of the Bill, which is a matter for Committee rather than the Second Reading. The question now is whether your Lordships will refuse to assent to the principle of allowing banking and commercial corporations and limited companies to have a voice in the elections of the local authorities to whose expenditure they so largely contribute. I confess that for my part I feel that the House has not heard from the noble Lord who spoke on behalf of His Majesty's Government any sufficient or valid objection to the principle of the Bill. I, therefore, hope that, if the Bill is to be rejected, it will not be rejected so summarily as is proposed.

Lord AVEBURY: My Lords, I have observed that when there is nothing else to be said against a Bill we are always told that it has been badly drafted. As a layman I am, of course, at a great disadvantage in attempting to answer the noble Lord who spoke on behalf of His Majesty's Government on that point. I can only say that the Bill was drawn by a lawyer of very great experience; and I submit that that argument, and, indeed, most of the arguments brought forward by Lord Allendale are really questions for Committee and do not go to the principle of the Bill. I should like to ask the noble Lord whether I am to understand that this question of the representation of companies is going to be dealt with in the Bill which His Majesty's Government propose to introduce. Unless the noble Lord can give me some assurance on that point I shall ask your Lordships to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill, which has the almost unanimous support of all those engaged in the commerce and industry of this country.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Loreburn): My Lords, I do not wish to say very much with regard to this Bill, and certainly I do not desire to appear as one who objects to any innovation. But this is certainly a very strong proposition. Hitherto votes have been given by men; now they are to be given by companies of men. It is quite a mistake to think that these properties are not represented; they are represented by their owners, who are all human beings. It is proposed to divorce the responsibility of exercising the franchise from the individual personality and to put it in the hands of a legal entity. Speaking for myself, I think that is a very strong proposal, and one of which I do not myself approve.

Viscount St. ALDWYN: My Lords, I confess I think there is something to be said for the principle contained in this Bill, because, as a matter of fact, in regard to local rates these companies are not represented by their shareholders as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has inferred. But I would suggest to my noble friend who has introduced this Bill whether it is worth his while to proceed further with it in view of the very decided opposition which has been given to it by His Majesty's Government. We understand that the question will soon arise in the shape of a Bill dealing with valuation and rating in England, on which it would be possible for my noble friend to bring forward this matter as an additional clause to the Bill. The principle involved is no doubt rather a new one in rating legislation, and as it is quite clear that this Bill cannot become law in the present session with the opposition of His Majesty's Government, I would suggest to my noble friend that it is hardly worth while to proceed with it now.

On Question that the Bill be read 2^a, their Lordships divided;—Contents, 42; Not Contents, 31.

CONTENTS

Marlborough, D.
Northumberland, D.

Bath, M.
Bristol, M.

Camperdown, E.
Cawdor, E.
Cromer, E.
Hardwicke, E.
Lauderdale, E.
Morley, E.
Northbrook, E.
Onslow, E.
Waldegrave, E.

Churchill, V.
Halifax, V.
Hardinge, V.
Hutchinson, V. (*E. Donoughmore.*)

Lord Courtney of Penwith.

Iveagh, V.

Ashbourne, L.
Atkinson, L.
Avebury, L. [*Teller.*]
Barrymore, L.
Belper, L.
Calthorpe, L.
Clifford of Chudleigh, L.
Clinton, L.
Clonbrock, L.
Courtney of Penwith, L.
Dunboyne, L.
Ebury, L.
Faber, L. [*Teller.*]
Kilmarnock, L. (*E. Erroll.*)
Lawrence, L.
Macnaghten, L.
Monk Bretton, L.
Newlands, L.
Newton, L.
Oriel, L. (*V. Masserene.*)
Oranmore and Browne, L.
Redesdale, L.
Ribblesdale, L.
Templemore, L.

NOT-CONTENTS.

Loreburn, L. (*L. Chancellor.*)

Ripon, M. (*L. Privy Seal.*)

Beauchamp, E. (*L. Steward.*)
Carrington, E.
Chesterfield, E.
Crewe, E.
Russell, E.

Althorp, V. (*L. Chamberlain.*)
Cross, V.
Wolverhampton, V.

Airedale, L.
Allendale, L.
Armitstead, L.
Burghclere, L.
Colebrooke, L. [*Teller.*]
Denman, L. [*Teller.*]
Eversley, L.
Fitzmaurice, L.
Hamilton of Dalzell, L.
Haversham, L.
Heneage, L.
Herschell, L.
Knollys, L.
Lochee, L.
Lyveden, L.
Nunburnholme, L.
O'Hagan, L.
Pirrie, L.
St. Davids, L.
Saye and Sele, L.
Stanley of Alderley, L.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee read.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE: I should be very glad, as this Bill has not been before the House for some time, if the noble Earl would give a short explanation on one or two points. When the Bill was orginally introduced everyone, of course, realised its general importance, and one of the matters that attracted attention was that it did not include Ireland. Ireland had been included in and omitted from previous Bills, and it was deemed wise to refer it to a Select Committee. The result of the consideration of the Committee was that they recommended the desirability of including Ireland, and the Bill was reprinted in accordance with the recommendations of that Committee and included Ireland practically without qualification. But, in view of the Amendments on the Paper in the name of the noble Earl the Leader of the House, I would invite a short explanation from him on one or two points.

I should think myself that on a question like this, dealing so much with the happiness and the welfare of the people, it would be desirable as far as possible to have common legislation. I do not see why what are safeguards in the matter of poisons in England, Scotland, and Wales, should not be applied also to Ireland. That was the idea, I gather, of the Select Committee, and I do not quite follow the alterations which it is now proposed to effect. The Amendments on the Paper purport, as I gather, to apply only two sections of the Bill to Ireland. I think that must be a mistake. I assume there is nothing more susceptible of general application to all parts of the country than a schedule of poisons. What is a poison in England should be a poison in Ireland. The schedule mentioned in the first section of the Bill is a very considered section. It was thought out and discussed, I have no doubt, with the wisdom of scientific knowledge. I gather, from my reading of the noble Earl's Amendments, that the schedule is not extended to Ireland. I only mention it because I can hardly think that that is intended, and if I am right in that the matter can be adjusted later. It is quite obvious it cannot be intended. If it is intended it is unintelligible, and if it is unintelligible it is indefensible.

There is one other matter to which I would draw attention. It has been required that persons selling poisons should label them as poisonous. I have no doubt that the law is not sought to be changed, but this is one of those occasions when repetition would be desirable; and as you are dealing in this Bill with poisonous substances I think it would be desirable to take the opportunity of a very short statement in the schedule to the effect that, as already indicated, poisons should be marked "Poisons." For common caution it is needed. I do not know whether it has been considered that poisonous substances used for agricultural purposes should be sold to the public without any indication that they may be dangerous to human life. They are called in the Bill poisonous, and therefore they might be very dangerous. It may be dealt with already, and I do not propose to say anything further on the subject. My only desire was to direct attention to it. I would also draw attention to the second part of the schedule. Under the heading of "Carbolic Acid" there is a statement that it is to be contained in a closed bottle and to be marked "Poisonous." I do not object; I think it wise and sensible; but why is that alone to be marked poisonous? That is a matter that may have been considered by the Select Committee, and it is one that can readily be set right in drafting. I do not think it would be desirable or fair that I should say anything more in reference to the matter now.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I think it might be for the general convenience if I say a word on the points raised by the noble and learned Lord opposite before we take the Bill clause by clause. As regards the general inclusion of Ireland, it is perfectly true that there was some dispute on that subject, and it was left to the Committee to decide one way or the other. They recommended the inclusion of Ireland, and the noble and learned Lord has very naturally, I think, drawn attention to the fact that only certain clauses, by an Amendment which I shall have to propose, apply to that country.

The case for the inclusion of Ireland was founded mainly on Clause 2 of the Bill. It was pointed out that the need for these agricultural and horticultural substances was very specially felt in Ireland owing to the sparsely populated character of some parts of the country, and that particular side of the question was very strongly pressed from Ireland. That applies also to Section 5, but Section 3, relating to companies, was not as strongly pressed from the Irish side. The case does not arise there at all to the same extent as it does in England, and when the matter came to be looked into, it was found that the pharmacy laws in Ireland are so different in many essential respects from those in England that, as a matter of drafting, it became absolutely impossible to incorporate them in this Bill. That is, as I am informed, the reason which actuated the Irish Office in asking that the other clauses of the Bill should not apply to Ireland. The noble and learned Lord raised the question of the schedule, and asked why that was not made to apply to Ireland. Ireland has always had a schedule of its own, drawn up by the College of Surgeons and amended from time to time by Order in Council. If, therefore, Ireland desires to have this particular schedule, or the amended schedule which I am going to propose, nothing is easier than for an Irish Order in Council to be obtained assimilating the Irish schedule to this one.

LORD ASHBOURNE: It is much easier to put it in this Bill.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: We do not know that Ireland wants this schedule. We have no information that it does. This is a schedule prepared by the Privy Council and the pharmacists of England, and whether it is the particular schedule which is preferred in Ireland, I am not in a position to say. But if the noble and learned Lord is right in thinking that it is, the two can quite well be assimilated. As regards the question of marking poisonous substances sold for agricultural and horticultural purposes, the noble and learned Lord will find that that is amply provided for in the regulations to be issued by the Privy Council. Those regulations have not, I think, been laid on the Table of the House, but I should be quite prepared to lay them at any time. The noble and learned Lord will find that his point is fully covered by those regulations. I think these are the only matters which were mentioned by the noble and learned Lord. Any other point that arises can be dealt with in the course of the discussion in Committee.

On Question, agreed to.

House in Committee, according to order.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Amendments made by the Joint Committee agreed to.

Clause 1:

*LORD ASHBOURNE said he thought it only fair to mention that, as at present advised, he would move, at the next stage of the Bill, that this be one of the sections that should apply to Ireland. It could be applied, he understood, without much alteration. He could not understand why, when they had thrashed out in a Select Committee with all the advice at their disposal, a new schedule carrying the schedule of poisons up-to-date, it should be enacted for England only, and that the old Irish schedules should be left to be varied from time to time as Ireland might think right.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Of course, there can be no objection to the noble and learned Lord pursuing the course which he indicates he means to take; but between now and then we shall, no doubt, be able to discover whether the Irish authorities desire to adopt this schedule, or not.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I move an Amendment in page 1, line 15, to leave out "for use exclusively in connection with agriculture or horticulture," and to insert "to be used exclusively in agriculture or horticulture for the destruction of insects, fungi, or bacteria, or as sheep dips or weed killers." This alteration is made to make it rather more clear exactly what substances were intended to be sold under this section. The form of it, I think, was suggested by the Pharmaceutical Society, and I understand that the Board of Agriculture agree to it, and, so far as we know, it is not objected to by anybody. In fact, the noble Viscount opposite (Lord Hill) has something of the same kind on the Paper.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 15, to leave out the words 'for use exclusively in connection with agriculture or horticulture,' and insert the words 'to be used exclusively in agriculture or horticulture for the destruction of insects, fungi, or bacteria, or as sheep dips or weed killers.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

VISCOUNT HILL said he noticed with satisfaction that the noble Earl had moved an Amendment to meet what they considered the rather wide wording in the clause as it stood. Practically there was very little difference between the noble Earl's Amendment and his. He would, however, ask the noble Earl whether he did not consider the word "bacteria" a little too wide. It might on some occasions cause the introduction of disinfectants.

LORD SALTOUN said the Committee had considered this matter very carefully, and he thought the words in the Bill were better than those in the Amendment moved by Lord Crewe, or in that standing in the name of Viscount Hill. The words in the clause were "for use exclusively." That kept them entirely for agricultural and horticultural purposes. There was very little in the matter, and if the Minister for Agriculture accepted Lord Crewe's Amendment he (Lord Saltoun) would not object.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, who also served on the Committee, agreed very much with the noble Lord who had just spoken. They were anxious to benefit agriculture by enabling farmers to get these things which they needed in their trade as easily as possible, and the wider the wording the better he would have liked it. But he supposed there were practical reasons which had led the Government to propose this restricting Amendment. For himself, he very much preferred the Amendment moved by Lord Crewe to the still more limited Amendment standing in the name of Viscount Hill.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: One noble Lord thinks these words too wide, and the other is of opinion that they are too narrow. Therefore, I think the words in my Amendment seem to be indicated as the correct ones.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD MONK-BRETTON moved an Amendment in page 1, line 17, to leave out "a local authority" and to insert "any local authority authorised to appoint an analyst for the purposes of the Sale of Foods and Drugs Act." He said the object was to make the foods and drugs authority the licensing authority under this Act, and the purpose of that was to obtain economy in the local administration of the Act by employing existing food and drug inspectors instead of new officials, and also to make the new areas coincide with those of the Foods and Drugs Act. It was certain that this Bill would necessitate greater inspection, because poisons were sold by more people and the danger which the public ran was increased. Sir Herbert Maxwell's Inter-Departmental Committee reported that the great disadvantage was that there was not sufficient inspection, and they advocated more inspection. Now there ought to be still greater inspection. Under the Bill as it stood the matter was left to the Privy Council. He did not think the Privy Council were the best body to leave it to, because that council had no connection whatever with local authorities. The whole connection of the Privy Council with the administration of poisons, had, he ventured to submit, now become archaic. They were made the authority for the administration of the Poisons Act at the time when there was no Local Government Board and no local authorities, and therefore he asked their Lordships to insert in this Bill the local authority which was to administer the Act. He believed that the foods and drugs authority was the best to administer the Act. The County Councils Association had petitioned the Committee with regard to the matter, and he might mention that this Amendment was put before the Committee and that the numbers were equal. He believed those who voted against it did so because they thought this was a question which would be more usefully raised in the House where members of His Majesty's Government were present than in Committee, and he agreed. The Amendment followed exactly the wording of the Margarine Act of 1887 and the Foods and Drugs Act of 1899, and whether in those words or in some other words he asked the Government to insert the provision that the foods and drugs authority should be the licensing authority under the Bill.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 17, to leave out the words 'a local authority,' and to insert the words 'any local authority authorised to appoint an analyst for the purposes of the Sale of Foods and Drugs Act.'"—(*Lord Monk-Bretton.*)

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, this is rather a complicated and intricate point, and I am not quite sure that the noble Lord in his Amendment does what he imagines he is doing. The effect of what the noble Lord desires to do would be that towns with a population exceeding 10,000 would be included, not by any test of the present population, but by the test of the population as it was in the year 1881. Then it is not the case that it is the local authorities who are charged with the appointment of analysts who inspect and take samples for the purpose of the Sale of Foods and Drugs Act. That business extends to any local authority which appoints a medical officer of health, an inspector of nuisances, or an inspector of weights and measures. These licences, of course, do not apply very largely to urban districts. That is obvious. The question is infinitely more important in connection with rural areas, because Clause 2 is drawn in order to meet a particular case of thinly-populated rural areas. What would happen under the noble Lord's Amendment would be this: The authorities entitled under his Amendment to issue licences would be the following: the Common Council of the City of London, the borough councils of London, the county councils of extra-Metropolitan counties, the councils of county boroughs, and the town councils of boroughs containing, according to the census of 1881, a population exceeding 10,000, and possessing either a Court of Quarter Sessions or a separate Police Court. The authorities we propose under the regulations are: the London County Council in London, the county councils of extra-Metropolitan counties, the councils of county boroughs, and the town councils of all boroughs exceeding 10,000 in population at the last census—the census of 1901; and I must say that ours seems to me of the two to be the more practical proposal. There is no particular connection that I can see between the work of foods and drugs inspectors and the issuing of licences under this Bill. I do not see that there is any special relation between the two things. I do not know whether the actual authorities are open to variation, but I suppose everybody would agree that the county councils are the proper authorities in the counties, and I should have thought the London County Council was the best authority for the London district. I am quite content myself to leave the matter as it is, and I confess I do not see the advantage of the Amendment suggested by the noble Lord.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY supported the proposal of the Government as against the Amendment. As drafted the Bill left the selection of the local authority to the Privy Council. The sketch which the noble Earl had given of the local authorities would, he believed, be thoroughly satisfactory. He thought it undesirable to have separate authorities for small country towns with 10,000 population, and that it was best to leave the Bill as it stood.

LORD BELPER said he understood from Lord Crewe that the authority in the counties would be the county council. But where was it stated that that would be the authority?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I ought to have explained that it is in the draft regulations proposed by the Privy Council.

LORD BELPER: Those regulations are already decided upon and in print?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Yes, they are drawn up.

LORD BELPER: Then we may take it that the authorities stated by the noble Earl are to be the authorities under the Bill?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Yes.

LORD BELPER did not, in these circumstances, see any necessity for making the proposed alteration.

LORD SALTOUN said he had been in favour of the Amendment, but after hearing the explanation of Lord Crewe as to who would be the authorities under the Bill he suggested that Lord Monk-Bretton should withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

VISCOUNT HILL moved an Amendment, to insert "nor shall the provisions of this section be applicable in any municipal borough or in any urban district containing a duly registered chemist and druggist actually carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist." It might be suggested in some quarters that he was proposing a measure to encourage trusts, but i was another principle altogether. The object of the Bill, no doubt, had been to meet the difficulty of farmers in some parts of Great Britain in obtaining sheep dips, etc. in small quantities. He did not know whether the evidence was satisfactory as proving that there was such a terrible inconvenience as had been represented. The farmers themselves did not attempt to approach the local chemists for these dips. In many cases they obtained them from the persons who purchased their wools, and in other cases co-operative parties went round the country and dipped the sheep at so much per hundred. In the county of London there were 12,000 qualified poison sellers. Surely that was enough for agriculture in this part of England. All large cities and towns were equally well supplied. His feeling in this matter was that the Government were persuaded to look upon this rather from the manufacturers' point of view. The manufacturers were the men who would benefit by the provision as it stood in the clause. He considered that the safety of the public was a far superior consideration. They naturally looked to the Government to support commercial activity, but, on the other hand, they must remember that the trade in poisons necessarily should be dealt with in a much more serious and different manner from the trade in ordinary commodities.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 22, after the word 'poisons,' to insert the words 'nor shall the provisions of this section be applicable in any municipal borough or in any urban district containing a duly registered chemist and druggist actually carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist.'"—(*Viscount Hill.*)

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I hope the Committee will not accept the noble Lord's Amendment. He desires that the provisions of this section shall not be applicable in any municipal borough or in any urban district containing a duly registered chemist and druggist actually carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist. It does not at all follow that because there is a chemist in a place, the reasonable requirements of agriculturists will be met. It is quite possible that he might decline to supply these substances at all. He might not think it worth his while. No provision is inserted in the Amendment compelling him to meet the requirements of the public at all, and, of course, it obviously would be impossible to insert such a section. These licences will, I think it is quite certain, being in the hands of responsible local authorities, be issued with very great care; and I have no doubt that no licence will be issued at all in places where there are chemists who are in the habit of selling these things and who satisfy the public. I must draw attention to subsection (2) of this section, which says that before granting any licence under this section the local authority shall take into consideration whether in the neighbourhood where the applicant for the licence carries on or intends to carry on business, the reasonable requirements of the public with respect to the purchase of such poisonous substances are satisfied. Therefore, if the chemist is there and sells the things, obviously no licence will be issued; but if he is there and does not sell the thing, the licence ought to be issued.

*LORD HAVERSHAM said the noble Viscount (Lord Hill) could not possibly have moved this Amendment if he had been on the Committee. They had abundant evidence that there was an enormous number of small towns in the West of Ireland and in the North of Scotland where there was no chemist at all. But, even supposing there were one, that man, under the noble Viscount's Amendment, would enjoy an absolute monopoly of the sale of these things, and the whole of the clause, which was to enlarge the area in which these things might be obtained would be rendered nugatory. If the noble Viscount would look at the next clause he would see that the whole question of licences was left to the local authority. If greater facilities were required the authority would grant the licence; if not they would refuse it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

VISCOUNT HILL moved to amend the proviso—

"Provided that His Majesty may by Order in Council amend this provision by adding thereto or removing therefrom any poisonous substance,"

by adding, after the word "substance," the words—

"Not being an article included in the schedule to this Act."

He explained that the object was cover a difficulty. He was afraid that when the Bill became an Act it would be quite possible at any time for those in authority to remove a poison, such as corrosive sublimate, from the schedule by the action of the Privy Council. If it was worth the while of Parliament to pass an Act restricting the sale of these very dangerous poisons, he thought the proper action to pursue was that if the poisons were to be at all changed the matter should be done by Act of Parliament.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 25, after the word 'substance,' to insert the words 'not being an

article included in the schedule to this Act.'"
—(*Viscount Hill.*)

*THE EARL OF CREWE: This is a question of machinery and convenience. I am sorry to oppose the noble Viscount's Amendment again, but I think it might lead to some practical inconvenience if it required an Act of Parliament either to withdraw some substance which it might be found was not safe to leave under this section or to add some newly invented substance which might be wanted. It might, for instance, be found that some substance authorised under this schedule was too dangerous to be sold. I do not think it is likely to happen, but it might conceivably occur, in which case the Privy Council would wish to withdraw it. But what is more likely to happen is that a new substance might be invented and the Privy Council might wish to include it. But these things are not done in the dark. Notice has to be published in the *Gazette*, and thereby the matter is brought before the cognisance of everybody when any proposal for a new Order in Council is intended. I think that will be an ample safeguard.

VISCOUNT HILL said the explanation of the noble Earl that public notice would be given of any change was satisfactory to him, and he, therefore, withdrew his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3:

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The next series of Amendments open up the whole vexed question of titles, about which there has been so much controversy both in and out of the House. I hope that by these Amendments we have arrived at a conclusion which is fairly satisfactory to everybody. It is, I hope, accepted both by the Pharmaceutical Society and also by the companies who sell. I propose, in lines 9 and 10, to leave out the words "and may use the description of chemist and druggist, or of chemist, or of druggist," and to subsequently insert the words standing in my name on the Paper. I had better speak of the Amendments together as the whole matter is one. I move to insert—

"A body corporate, and in Scotland a firm or partnership—"

—in Scotland a firm or partnership is a technical term which, I understand, has a different meaning from that which it would bear in England—

"—may use the description of chemist or druggist, or of chemist, or of druggist, or of dispensing chemist or druggist, if the foregoing requirements as to the carrying on of the business are observed——"

that is to say, provided there is a qualified man in every shop or place in which the business is carried on—

"And if one at least of the board of directors or other governing body of the body corporate, or one at least of the members of the firm or partnership, as the case may be, is a duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist, but nothing in this provision shall authorise any body corporate, or in Scotland a firm or partnership to use the description of pharmacist."

It is important to see how it comes about that the great companies accept this Amendment, as I am glad to believe they do. They do not use the title of chemist and druggist or chemist or druggist. Harrod's Stores, the Army and Navy Stores, and others, do not use this title, and therefore they are not obliged by this Amendment to place a qualified chemist on their board. All that they want to do is to be able to call themselves chemists on their labels and to sell, as they do in a very well-managed fashion, the various drugs. There are other companies who sell on a large scale who also are not affected by this provision, because they do have qualified men on their boards. There are some of the great chemist companies so well-known by name and by advertisement who do not object to this Amendment for that reason. But it was pointed out to us that there is a third possible class of company—namely, the bogus company; that is to say, a man gets six other men of straw to form themselves into a company. It is conceivable that a man who has been removed from the Pharmaceutical Society for malpractices might form a company of that kind, call himself a chemist and druggist, and set up as a one-man company. That we prevent, as we hope, by this provision that there must be a qualified man on the board or partnership. I think, therefore, that this Amendment, which has been the result of a great deal of discussion and a great deal of thought, has at last reached a sufficient measure of agreement to satisfy all parties. So far as regular chemists are concerned, by a subsequent Amendment we preserve to them the special title of pharmacist. That will be the mark that will differentiate them from those who merely sell drugs as chemists, and by that means I hope we have secured, if not their complete approval, at any rate their acquiescence. I therefore move this series of Amendments with considerable confidence that the House will be willing to accept them.

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, lines 9 and 10, to leave out the words 'and may use the description of chemist and druggist, or of chemist, or of druggist,' and in line 16, after the word 'business' to insert the words 'A body corporate, and in Scotland a firm or partnership, may use the description of chemist and druggist, or of chemist or of druggist, or of dispensing chemist or druggist, if the foregoing requirements as to the carrying on of the business are observed, and if one at least of the board of directors or other governing body of the body corporate, or one at least of the members of the firm or partnership, as the case may be, is a duly registered pharmaceutical chemist or chemist and druggist, but nothing in this provision shall authorise any body corporate, or in Scotland a firm or partnership, to use the description of pharmacist.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

*Lord HAVERSHAM congratulated the noble Earl in charge of the Bill upon th strategy with which he had turned their flank by the alteration of his own Amendment. As the Amendment stood the previous night the words "dispensing chemist or druggist" appeared at the end, but they had now been dropped. The addition of those words was strongly objected to by some of the leading firms who had been in the habit for many years of using this term. He was very glad that the noble Earl had been able to drop those words, as such a provision would have constituted a grievance, and involved a serious financial loss to the companies concerned. The description of "pharmacist" was a very different thing. Pharmacist was a professional term; chemist was a trade term. He failed to see what security the provision in the Amendment of requiring one qualified chemist to be on the directorate of the company would afford, as the qualified director might be a sleeping partner, and the safety of the public arose from having a qualified dispenser in each shop. He held in his hand the judgment of Lord Blackburn, in which the noble and learned Lord distinctly said that the whole safety of the public depended on the keeping of a qualified assistant to superintend and conduct the sale of drugs.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY agreed with Lord Haversham, but felt that as a settlement had been arrived at by compromise it was inadvisable to reopen it.

Lord SALTOUN said the wording had been very carefully considered by the Committee, and the provision requiring a qualified person to be in charge of every shop was inserted solely for the protection of the public. The Committee did not accept the provision that one of the members of the firm should be a duly registered chemist, but, as the matter had been agreed to, he did not desire to say anything more on the subject.

Lord EBURY asked permission, as he was a party to the compromise on this question two years ago, to define his attitude in regard to the present proposals. Having ascertained from the newspapers the intentions of the noble Earl with regard to this Bill he sought and secured assurances that the proposals, where they varied from the compromise of two years ago, should be so worded as not to bring within their operation companies which, although they transacted the business of chemists and druggists, did not employ that designation in their title. His noble friend gave him those assurances and had repeated them again to-day. He was sure the assurances were quite sincere. But there would be one better alternative, in his opinion, than the acceptance of the proposed words, and that would be to pass the clause in the form in which it came down to the House from the Joint Committee appointed to consider the Bill. If that alternative were offered to him he would certainly embrace it.

VISCOUNT HILL said he had obtained information as to a company that had recently been formed under the new Companies Act. The men concerned were engineers, but they had registered themselves as chemists and druggists. Supposing they employed a qualified man to sell drugs, he would only be a servant. He would like to know what guarantee the public had in such a case of the safe dispensing of medicines.

LORD ASHBOURNE understood that the Amendment was consistent with the earlier provision that every place of business would have to be conducted by a duly qualified chemist. He understood that that was not to be affected.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: That is so. Noble Lords will see in the Amendment the provision that it is subject to the foregoing requirements as to the carrying on of the business being observed.

LORD ASHBOURNE: And, in addition, the Amendment seeks to secure that in certain cases there shall be a duly registered chemist on the board of directors?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: That is so. This is really not a very important matter, but it does represent, as several noble Lords have said, an arrangement which has been arrived at. My noble friend behind me is perfectly right in saying that the titles either of chemist, or of druggist, or of chemist and druggist, or of dispensing chemist and druggist, cannot be used, although the business may be carried on—it is important to bear that distinction in mind—unless there is a qualified chemist on the board of directors. As the noble Lord opposite, Lord Ebury, has said, we fully admitted that to compel, for instance, the Army and Navy Stores, with which the noble Lord is connected, to place a qualified chemist and druggist on their board for the purposes of this Act would be something of an absurdity; and he, of course, will admit, in his turn, that he is relieved from any such responsibility by the terms of the Amendment now before the Committee. He does not want to use the title either of chemist or druggist, and, therefore, need not have a qualified man on his board. The noble Lord behind me, Lord Haversham, asked why this Amendment was necessary at all. Its intention, I admit, is not entirely for the protection of the public, although it does to some degree enter into the protection of the public. It is the desire of the pharmacy profession to meet a case of this kind. A one-man company is formed, employing no doubt a qualified assistant, but that man is, as the noble Viscount opposite has pointed out, the absolute servant of this not merely unqualified, but possibly disqualified person. Therefore, although he may be held in one sense responsible, he may be placed in a position of extreme difficulty as between his duty to the public and his duty to his employer. That kind of company, we maintain, has no *locus standi* to exist at all, if it is prevented from existing by this Amendment. I think it will be altogether to the advantage of the public. We entirely appreciate the work done by great chemist companies, such as Boots, and companies of that kind. We also appreciate the work done by individual chemists in small shops; but the small employer who uses a qualified chemist for his own purposes is not, we think, a person who deserves any sympathy or support; and it is the fact that it may very fairly be held that public safety is to some extent compromised by the existence of shops of that kind. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will agree to the Amendment as it stands.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4:

THE EARL OF CREWE moved to amend subsection (*b*)—

> "Providing for the registration, upon payment of the prescribed fee, as pharmaceutical chemists or chemists and druggists under the Pharmacy Acts, 1852 and 1868, without examination, of any persons holding colonial diplomas who produce evidence satisfactory to the council of the society that they are persons of sufficient skill and knowledge to be so registered,"

by adding, after the word "diplomas," the words "or of qualified military dispensers." The noble Earl said: This is a small Amendment which is inserted at the desire of the War Office, and I have no doubt your Lordships will agree to it.

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 35, after the word 'diplomas,' to insert the words 'or of qualified military dispensers.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5:

LORD CLINTON moved to leave out the word "poison" and to insert the word "substance" in five places in Clause 5. His object was, he explained, to avoid the confusion which probably might arise owing to the use of the word "poison" to cover the very many meanings attached to that word in the Bill. It was very little more than a verbal Amendment, but he thought it one of considerable advantage.

Amendment moved—

"In page 4, line 1, to leave out the word poison,' and to insert the word 'substance.'" —(*Lord Clinton.*)

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I do not know that the proposed substitution is very much of an improvement in the Bill as it stands, but I do not wish to offer any opposition to it.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendment agreed to.

LORD CLINTON moved to amend the first subsection, which provided that—

"It shall not be lawful to sell any poison to which this section applies by retail, unless the box, bottle, vessel, wrapper, or cover in which the poison is contained is distinctly labelled with the name of the substance and the word 'poison',"

by omitting "Poison," and inserting "Dangerous; not to be taken." He said it was practically the same as his other Amendments, and was to show the difference between the two classes of poisons.

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 4, to leave out the word 'word,' and to insert the word 'words,' and to leave out the word 'poison,' and to insert the words 'Dangerous; not to be taken.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I do not think that it is practically the same. You have to consider the effect of the word "poison" on the public. These things undoubtedly are poisons, and, in my opinion, the word "poison" is a more effective word to frighten the public than the word "dangerous."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6:

*THE EARL OF CREWE moved to omit from Clause 6 the words applying the Bill to Ireland. He said: I have already explained, on the Motion to go into Committee, the reasons which actuated us in applying only two sections of this Bill to Ireland, and I do not think I need say any more on the subject. I shall move a new clause after Clause 6 dealing with the application to Ireland.

Amendment moved—

"In page 4, line 19, to leave out from the word 'nine' to the end of the clause.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE said he, too, had stated all he wished to say on this point. But he would observe that the particular Amendment it was now sought by the noble Earl largely to obliterate was moved in the Select Committee by the Chairman, Lord Haversham, and assented to without objection.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE, who last year moved the exclusion of Ireland from the Bill, said that as its application to Ireland had been considered by the Select Committee and they recommended that Ireland should be included, he would not further oppose its inclusion.

On Question, Amendment agreed to

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 6, to insert the following new Clause:—'(1) The provisions of this Act relative to the regulation of sale of certain poisonous substances for agricultural and horticultural purposes and to restrictions on sale of certain mineral acids shall apply to Ireland, with the following modifications: (*a*) For the reference to the Pharmacy Act, 1868, there shall be substituted a reference to the Pharmacy Act (Ireland), 1875, and the Pharmacy Act (Ireland) 1875, Amendment Act, 1890, and the reference to regulations made under Section one of the first-mentioned Act shall not apply; (*b*) for references to Orders in Council by His Majesty, or to Orders in Council, there shall be substituted references to Orders in Council by the Lord-Lieutenant; (*c*) the reference to a duly registered chemist and druggist shall include a reference to a registered druggist. (2) Save as provided by this section, the foregoing provisions of this Act shall not apply to Ireland.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Schedule:

*THE EARL OF **CREWE** moved to leave out the Schedule and to insert a new Schedule. The noble Earl said, I need not say anything upon this Amendment except that the amended Schedule has been arrived at by a comparison of the original Government Schedule with that presented by the Pharmaceutical Society. It has been the subject of close discussion between the competent people representing the Government chemists and analysts and the society, and we hope that this Schedule as now to be amended really produces the best features of both the lists which were prepared, one by the Government, and one by the society.

Amendment moved—

"In pages 5 and 6, to leave out the Schedule. and to insert the following new Schedule:—'Part I.—Arsenic and its medicinal preparations; aconite, aconitine, and their preparations; alkaloids:—all poisonous vegetable alkaloids not specifically named in this Schedule and their salts, and all poisonous derivatives of vegetable alkaloids; atropine and its salts, and their preparations; belladonna, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·1 or more per cent. of belladonna alkaloids; cantharides, and its poisonous derivatives; coca any preparation or admixture of, containing 1 or more per cent. of coca alkaloids; corrosive sublimate; cyanide of potassium, and all poisonous cyanides and their preparations; emetic tartar, and all preparations or admixtures containing 1 or more per cent. of emetic tartar; ergot of rye, and preparations of ergots; nux vomica, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·2 or more per cent. of strychnine; opium and all preparations or admixtures containing 1 or more per cent. morphine; picrotoxin; prussic acid, and all preparations or admixtures containing 0·1 or more per cent. of prussic acid; savin and its oil, and all preparations or admixtures containing savin or its oil. Part II.—Almonds, essential oil of (unless deprived of prussic acid); antimonial wine; cantharides, tincture and all vesicating liquid preparations or admixtures of; carbolic acid, and liquid preparations of carbolic acid and its homologues containing more than 3 per cent. of those substances, except preparations for use as sheep wash or for any other purpose in connection with agriculture or horticulture contained in a closed vessel distinctly labelled with the word 'poisonous,' the name and address of the seller, and a notice of the special purposes for which the preparations are intended; chloral hydrate; chloroform, and all preparations or admixtures containing more than 20 per cent. of chloroform; coca, any preparation or admixture of, containing more than 0·1 per cent. but less than 1 per cent. of coca alkaloids; digitalis; mercuric iodide; mercuric sulphocyanide; oxalic acid; poppies, all preparations of, excepting red poppy petals and syrup of red poppies (papaver rhæas); precipitate, red, and all oxides of mercury; precipitate, white; strophanthus; sulphonal; all preparations or admixtures which are not included in Part I. of this Schedule, and contain a poison within the meaning of the Pharmacy Acts, except preparations or admixtures the exclusion of which from this Schedule is indicated by the words therein relating to carbolic acid, chloroform, and coca, and except such substances as come within the provisions of Section 5 of this Act.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD **ASHBOURNE** inquired whether the amended Schedule contained any substantial alterations.

*THE EARL OF **CREWE**: It does not include, so far as I know, any new substances of importance except in a technical sense. The terms of description are in some degree altered, but the Schedule does not include any new substance which would be of interest to the noble and learned Lord or myself.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with Amendments to the House.

Moved, "That the Standing Committee be negatived."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD **ASHBOURNE**: Why is the Standing Committee to be negatived?

If the Standing Committee is to be recognised at all, it is just a Bill of this kind that should be referred to it.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I would remind the noble and learned Lord that the Bill has been very carefully considered by a Joint Committee and has also had the advantage of the close attention of the Government draftsman. But, if the noble and learned Lord wishes it, the Bill shall go to the Standing Committee.

LORD ASHBOURNE: I think the fact that the noble Earl has thrown over a substantial part of the recommendations of the Select Committee is a good reason why this Bill should go to the Standing Committee. I will, however, withdraw my objection.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: I beg to give notice that, on some early day, I shall move the abolition of the Standing Committee stage.

On Question, Standing Committee negatived.

The Report of Amendments to be received on Tuesday next, and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 151.)

LAW OF DISTRESS AMENDMENT BILL.
[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH: My Lords, the object of this Bill is to amend the law as regards a landlord's right of distress. I think I may almost describe it as a reply to an invitation from the Judicial Bench. As your Lordships are aware, the law of distress in its primary form enabled the landlord to seize on any goods in place of rent due. The extreme severity of that law was alleviated long ago, and the Act of 1871 exempted from seizure the goods of lodgers, excepting in so far as they were in arrears of rent to their immediate landlord. That left the general law in a condition that required a good deal of amendment and a strong case that happened two years ago drew special attention to it.

Your Lordships will probably remember the incident. A society of artists entered into an agreement with a person to hold an exhibition of their productions in a hall in the West End, and scarcely had their pictures been stored there than the superior landlord seized them in distress to meet the rent due to him from the immediate landlord of the society. The case was brought before the Courts, and Mr. Justice Neville expressed a strong opinion upon the barbarity of the law, and said it was a scandal that it should remain in that condition unamended. He was constrained, however, to allow the right of the superior landlord to be exercised. The case was carried to the Court of Appeal where the same language was held in respect to the state of the law and the necessity of amending it.

The present Bill is intended to move in the direction indicated, if I may say so, by members of the Judicial Bench. It proposes practically to place all tenants in the position in which lodgers are placed under the Lodgers' Goods Protection Act of 1871, and to exempt their goods from seizure by the superior landlord, except so far as the tenant might be in arrear to the immediate landlord. To that extent the superior landlord would be entitled to seize and make good his claim. I think the principle of the Bill will recommend itself to your Lordships' approbation. The Bill does ensure the result aimed at, though I must admit that the form of it may require some attention. It is, in fact, an illustration of that form of drafting to which the attention of your Lordships was recently drawn and which is open to much criticism. It is an illustration of drafting by reference, but I hope that objection to the form of the Bill will not interfere with the acceptance of the Second Reading in order that in Committee it may be put into a shape that will more recommend itself.

The observations made from the Judicial Bench in the case to which I have referred excited the attention of many people. When I read them I thought the amendment of the law which was invited by Mr. Justice Neville and the Judges of the Appeal Court might reasonably be introduced into your Lordships' House. I therefore drafted a Bill for the purpose. I recognised, however, that any Bill introduced in your Lordship's House would stand no chance of becoming law, owing to the state of business in the other House, unless it received the support of His Majesty's Government. I subsequently observed that a Member of the other House had taken up the subject and introduced a Bill, and thereupon I readily agreed not to proceed further with my own project. The hon. Member who had charge of the Bill did not secure a good place in the ballot, and the only way in which it was possible to pass the Bill was by presenting it to the other House in the form in which it has now reached your Lordships. It has been considered there very carefully. It was read a second time and referred to one of the Grand Committees, where it was gone into in great detail. A readiness was expressed—I do not know that I can put it higher—on the partof the representative of the Government to entertain the notion of a Consolidating Bill to amend the law of distress, which would incorporate the present Bill and the Act of 1871 in one measure.

But I appeal to your Lordships to give this Bill a Second Reading on account of its merits, so that we may have an opportunity in Committee to put it in a shape which may commend it to your Lordships generally. I should be happy to confer between now and the Committee stage with any of your Lordships who might do me the honour of making suggestions as to the form of the Bill. I certainly hope that this scandalous state of the law will not remain unamended for another year. I beg very confidently to recommend the principle of the Bill to your Lordships.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—*(Lord Courtney of Penwith.)*

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I do not want to interpose between the noble Lord and the House, except to say that though this is not a Government Bill, it is one which the Government support, simply because it gives fair play. I hope that your Lordships will distinguish between form and substance. The question of form is, after all, a small matter. The Bill is drawn on the basis of assimilating other persons to lodgers. It might have been drawn otherwise, and have been placed alongside a Consolidating Bill in the same way as the Patents Bill was a year and a-half ago. As to the question of form, we can correct that. The point is whether it is right in substance. Surely it is right. I do not want to dogmatise, but I think everybody will hold that.

At present the general law is that the landlord may distrain on any goods he finds on the premises, whether they belong to the tenant or not, in order to pay the rent due by the tenant alone. In other words, the property of one man may be taken to pay the debt of another. That is very cruel indeed in operation, as was exemplified in the case of the Society of Artists to which reference has been made. They had placed their pictures in the hall for the purpose of selling them, and had paid the rent for the use of the hall; yet down came the superior landlord and seized their pictures and sold them because his tenant had not paid him. That is revolting, I venture to think, to all lovers of fair play.

May I read two or three sentences from what was said by Lord Blackburn as to how this extraordinary law came to be the law of England. The learned Judge said—

> "The general rule of common law was that whatever was found on demised premises, whether belonging to a stranger or not, might be seized by the landlord and held as a distress till the rent was paid or the service performed. That was the old law, and it produced no harm. But in the reign of William and Mary a very harsh and unjust law was passed by which the right was given to the landlord to sell goods seized, and to apply the proceeds to the payment of the rent unless the tenant or owner of the goods first paid it; and this held out a great temptation to the landlord to seize goods although he knew they were not the tenants.'

I do not believe most landlords would seize the goods of a stranger which were upon their tenants' premises. It is wrong, hard, and unfair, that that should be done. There are exceptions to that harsh rule which have been engrafted upon it from time to time, so that the enactment has been eroded a good deal. The principle of the Bill is one of elementary fairness, and one which will, therefore, appeal to your Lordships.

LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, while I have no intention of offering any objection to the Second Reading of the

Bill I was glad to recognise in the candid and temperate statement of Lord Courtney that he was aware of the fact that the Bill requires consideration and amendment. No one would seek to defend at this time of day the right to seize one man's property for another man's debt. Efforts have from time to time been made, as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack said, to meet this harsh rule in certain cases. The most notable is the Act of 1871, known as the Lodgers' Goods Protection Act. That Act gave protection in respect of lodgers' goods, and is in beneficent operation. But this Bill is clumsy and awkward, and in some particulars may not be quite defensible. I do not doubt that it represents an honest desire to deal with the problem; but when it comes to be considered it will be found to need alteration. After all, landlords are not to be treated as outlaws. There may be cases in which they have a legitimate right to appeal to this old law of distress, and, therefore, that law should not be too drastically dealt with. I noted the noble Lord's statement that he had applied his own skill to drafting a Bill. It would be very interesting if the noble Lord's Bill could be put side by side with this one, and perhaps he will give us an opportunity of doing so.

Viscount St. ALDWYN: My Lords, before we part with the Second Reading of this Bill I think it would be useful to call the attention of your Lordships to its extraordinary drafting, which has been already admitted by the noble Lord in charge of the measure. It is one of the worst specimens of drafting by reference that I have ever seen. The Act which it is proposed to amend is the Lodgers' Goods Protection Act of 1871. I hold that Act in my hand. The enacting part of it, omitting the preamble, takes less than a page of the Statute-Book. It consists of no more than three enacting clauses, which this Bill proposes to amend.

How does it propose to amend them? In the first place, wherever the word "lodger" occurs in the existing Act, certain other words are to be substituted. The word "lodger" occurs fourteen or fifteen times in the forty-five lines of the original Act. Next the Bill proposes to strike out six lines of the first section of the existing Act, and to substitute ten lines for them. It strikes out three lines in the second section of the Act, and substitutes five lines for them. Then it leaves out the whole of the third section in the Act, and substitutes a much longer one; and, finally, it contains a new clause altogether excluding certain goods. Then there is the short title and the construction of the Act. If it were intended to frame a Bill from which it should be impossible for anyone to ascertain the law, that purpose could not have been carried out better than in this Bill. No one, whether lawyer or not, could possibly ascertain from it what the law is without having the other Act also in his hand.

After what has been said by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack I should hope that, assuming the House is prepared to accept this Bill as it stands —I do not know whether it is or not— His Majesty's Government would take up this question, repeal the Act of 1871, and bring in a complete Bill enacting the law as it is proposed to be amended by this Bill. I must say that if we are in this House to fulfil our duty as a revising Chamber, we should never find a better case for its exercise than is afforded by this Bill. I hope that is the course which His Majesty's Government will follow. I also trust that, after what has been said recently from both sides of the House as to the evils of legislation by reference, some practical step will be taken to show the other House and those concerned that, at any rate, we do not approve of this evil system.

*The Earl of CREWE: My Lords, I am in entire agreement with everything that has fallen from the noble Viscount, both as regards the form of this particular Bill and on the general subject of legislation by reference; but I confess I am a little nervous when he asks us to take up a private Bill, after what fell from the noble Marquess yesterday, even when the object is such a good one as this Bill has in view. I therefore cannot make any promise of that kind, but I am sure that if the noble Viscount devoted himself to wording it he would do it quite as well as, if not better than, we could. I agree that if the Bill is to leave your Lordships' House it ought to leave it, though not in substance, at any rate in form, very different from what it is at present.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: My Lords, I do not wish to trouble your Lordships with a subject which is much better dealt with by lawyers than by laymen, and I had hoped that some noble Lord would have called attention to the matter of this Bill as well as to its form. I do not consider the matter is quite so simple as some noble Lords seem to think. I suppose we all agree that hard cases such as that mentioned by Lord Courtney ought to be remedied; and if the Bill had been confined to dealing with cases of that sort I think we should all have agreed. But I must point out that it goes a great deal further. Under the Bill a ground landlord may be placed in a serious difficulty if the person to whom he had let land on a building lease disappears after having obtained a premium from a tenant to whom the property had been sub-let without the landowner having any voice in the matter.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: He could take possession of the property. A landowner letting land on lease or otherwise always reserves the power of re-entry in the event of the rent not being paid, and if the ground rent were not paid he would take possession of the property with the improvements upon it. That is what makes ground rents such a valuable property.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: If the noble and learned Lord says that, of course I accept it; but I was informed that there was no protection for the ground landlord in the Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (IRELAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE: My Lords, I have some confidence in asking your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill, because it is one of the very few measures relating to Ireland which have been fortunate enough to pass the House of Commons with unanimous consent. I am informed that it has the approval of the temperance party, and also of the trade in Ireland. It is a Bill to amend the law relating to drunkenness in Ireland and for purposes connected therewith.

I need only mention a few of the most important clauses. The first clause protects the property of a woman where the husband has been proved to be a habitual drunkard, and the second clause does the same for the property of the husband where the wife is a habitual drunkard. Clause 4 prevents anything so protected from being sold, and the fifth clause gives a right of appeal when an order imposing a fine or inflicting punishment has been made under the Act. The seventh clause states that, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875, where the breach of contract for which damages are awarded under that Act consists of or includes drunkenness, or was directly contributed to by drunkenness, the Court may award imprisonment in default of the payment of the said damages as if the same were a penal sum. The 8th Clause makes a person liable to a penalty who, being drunk while in charge of any person, or animal, or thing, endangers the life or limb of any person; and Clause 10 provides a penalty for persons found drunk in charge of children on licensed premises. There are one or two points, which, perhaps, may require Amendment in Committee, but I think I may recommend the Bill as a good one in itself. I therefore ask your Lordships to give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Oranmore and Browne.*)

Lord DENMAN: My Lords, the noble Lord has given a very clear and concise account of the contents of the Bill, which has the approval of the Government, and to the Second Reading of which they cordially assent.

Lord ASHBOURNE: My Lords, it is impossible to read this Bill without seeing that it is aimed at meeting a great evil. It was piloted through the House of Commons by the Marquess of Hamilton the Member for Londonderry, and it deals with a matter which has attracted a great deal of attention in that part of the country with which my noble friend is connected. It provides for the grave case of husbands who become habitual drunkards and ruin their homes, and also with the case of married women who become habitual drunkards and wreck the happiness of their families. The Bill commended itself to general approval in the House of Commons, and I apprehend that your Lordships will be pleased to accord to it a rapid transit through this House.

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS (MASTERS) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

POLICE (SUPERANNUATION) BILL.

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

THE FLYING OF THE UNION JACK.

***Earl HOWE**: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government, with a view to removing any possible doubt that may exist on the subject, whether it is a fact that the full Union Jack may be flown on land by every citizen in the Empire as well as on Government Offices and Public Buildings.

***The Earl of CREWE**: My Lords, the noble Earl asks me, with a view to removing any possible doubt that may exist on the subject, whether it is a fact that the full Union Jack may be flown on land by every citizen in the Empire. As many of us know, there has existed in the public mind a curious confusion as to what flags may be flown and what may not. At one time it seemed to be believed that the Royal Standard could be flown anywhere and by anybody. That, however, as we now know, is not the case. It was formally announced that the Royal Standard is the personal flag of the Sovereign, and cannot properly be flown without His Majesty's permission, which is only granted when either the King or Queen is present. But, of course, a very different state of things applies to the Union Jack. I think it may fairly be stated, in reply to the noble Earl, that the Union Jack should be regarded as the National flag, and it undoubtedly may be flown on land by all His Majesty's subjects.

The Earl of MEATH: My Lords' I am very pleased indeed to hear from His Majesty's Government the statement that the Union Jack may be flown on land by all British subjects. There has been a certain amount of doubt on the subject, and it is as well that it should have been set at rest. It is rather curious that a British citizen is about the only one who is not quite certain under what flag he really stands as a private citizen; and I have known of some instances in this country where the Union Jack has actually been pulled down by the police. I am obliged to His Majesty's Government for having definitely cleared up this matter.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 14*th July*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz:—Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords].—To be read the third time To-morrow.

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.—Ordered, That, in the case of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill, Standing Order 243 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read the third time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Bill accordingly read the third time, and passed.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Land Values (Scotland) Bill; Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to:—Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Norwich, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Wantage, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Lambeth, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Creetown; and Wesleyan Methodist Church in Great Britain; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL.

Petition of the Association of Trade Protection Societies of the United Kingdom, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Gamrie and Macduff; Leswalt; Tillicoultry; Tranent; Uphall; and Whitburn; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (ARMY AND POPULATION)

Return [presented 13th July] to be printed. [No. 208.]

ARMY (PAY, NON-EFFECTIVE PAY, AND ALLOWANCES.)

Copy presented, of List of Exceptions to the Army Regulations as to Pay, Non-effective Pay, and Allowances sanctioned during the year 1907–8 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (RAILWAYS).

Copy presented, of Administrative Report on the Railways in India for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXPLOSIONS (EXPLOSION OF GELIGNITE AT ROSLIN, EDINBURGH).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the circumstances attending an Explosion of Gelignite which occurred at the Factory of Messrs. Curtis and Harvey, Limited, at Roslin, Edinburgh, on 26th March, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in

Scotland, dated 13th July, 1908, providing for Special Grants in aid of certain School Boards in Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1907. Part II. Salmon Fisheries [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCOTTISH BILLS.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Scottish Bills have leave to sit this day after Four o'clock.—(*Mr. Erskine.*)

LOCAL TAXATION LICENCES, 1907–8.

Return ordered, "showing, in respect of each county in England and Wales, the number of the various Local Taxation Licences issued in the year ended the 31st day of March, 1908, under the heads set out in the Report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, 1906–7 (Table XL., Column 1, pages 52–58)."—(*Mr. Walter Rea.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Labourers' Cottages in County Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of labourers' cottages erected in County Clare; and what is the number in course of erection, giving the names of the different unions.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) As promised in my Answer to the hon. Member's oral Question to-day I give the following table, which shows the number of labourers' cottages provided and authorised in each rural district of County Clare—

Rural District.	Number provided on 31st March, 1908.	Number authorised but not provided on 31st March.	Number authorised since 31st March.
Ballyvaghan - -	17	3	—
Corrofin - - -	15	—	41
Ennis - - -	166	1	132
Ennistymon - -	26	1	85
Killadysert - -	52	42	—
Kilrush - - -	15	31	120
Limerick (No. 2) -	86	19	—
Scariff - - -	33	2	75
Tulla - - -	108	90	—
Total - -	518	189	453

Salaries of Irish School Teachers.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many principal and assistant teachers there are in Ireland; what is the method of paying assistant teachers in salary and capitation; whether an assistant in a school with an average attendance of sixty gets no capitation grant whatever;

what is the initial and the maximum salary of an assistant teacher; and how many years must he work before he can reach that maximum.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The number of principal teachers is 8,101, and the number of assistants 4,604. Assistants are, as a rule, granted third-grade salary and increments of good service salary, together with residual capitation grant according to the scale shown in the rules. An assistant in a school which has an average attendance of sixty receives no residual grant. The initial salary of assistants is for men £56 and for women £44, and the ordinary maximum is £77 for men and £65 for women. Assistants are also entitled to residual capitation grant as well as to bonuses under the Irish Education Act. It takes nine years for an assistant to reach his or her maximum.

Dismissal of Mr. Algernon Sidgreaves, British Consul at Cadiz.

MR. COWAN (Surrey, Guildford): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state whether Mr. Algernon Sidgreaves is, or was recently, British Pro-Consul at Cadiz, and, if so, whether he has been constantly at his post during the last two months; if Mr. Algernon Sidgreaves is no longer British Pro-Consul at Cadiz; when he vacated that post, whether by resignation or otherwise; and whether the conduct and services of Mr. Algernon Sidgreaves have always been satisfactory.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) Mr. Sidgreaves was appointed British Pro-Consul at Cadiz on 27th November, 1907, and his services were dispensed with in April of this year on account of grave irregularities in his conduct.

Opium Prices.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what has been the average price obtained month by month during the first six months of 1908 for a chest of opium at the auction sales in Calcutta, and what price was estimated in the Budget for the current year.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Answer to the first Question, is Rs. 1,411; and to the second, Rs. 1,300.

Factory Labour in India.

MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he has received the Report of the Commission appointed by the Government of India to inquire into the hours of labour and other conditions of factory life in India; and, if so, when will it be published and will it contain the Minority Report.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Secretary of State has received the Report. He proposes to present it as soon as ever the necessary supply of copies is received from India. The minutes of dissent will be included.

The Suffragist Demonstration—Provision of Police Escort.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if on the 30th ultimo a superintendent and an inspector of police attended the suffragette meeting at Caxton Hall, and informed the leaders of the women that they had come to escort the deputation to the House of Commons, and made arrangements for this purpose and escorted them to the House; and, if so, can he state why it was that the deputation was not received after making all these arrangements.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) It was merely in order to facilitate the deputation's passage that the superintendent of the A. Division arranged to escort them to the House and to escort them back again when they had received a verbal reply to their verbal message.

Removal of Mr. Brock's Studio.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can now give the date by which it is likely that the studio erected for Mr. Brock, R.A., on Primrose Hill will be removed and the use of the site on which it stands be restored to the public.

(*Answered by Mr. L. Harcourt.*) I cannot yet fix a date, but my hon. friend may rest assured that the studio will not remain one day longer than is absolutely necessary.

Distribution of the Caldbeck Estate.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the names of the parties recommended to share in the distribution of the untenanted land on the estate of Captain Caldbeck, Ballacolla, should the Estates Commissioners purchase the property.

Mr. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the names of the tenants in the village of Ballacolla, Queen's County, whom the Estates Commissioners propose to exclude from the sale on the Caldbeck estate, and their reasons for so doing.

Mr. DELANY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Captain Caldbeck has raised objection to the erection of five labourers' cottages upon his untenanted land; and, in view of the fact that the Estates Commissioners are in treaty for the purchase of the whole estate, will he say what steps it is proposed to take to secure the erection of these cottages.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are unable to make final arrangements for the purchase of the estate in question and for the allotment of the untenanted land until it has been decided what portion of the property is to be acquired for the purpose of the Labourers Acts. An inquiry into the scheme of the Abbeyleix Rural District Council for the provision of labourers' cottages has recently been held, but the inspector's order has not yet been made. The inspector is considering the objections which were made to the erection of cottages on the estate in question.

Irish Lords-Lieutenant of Counties.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in view of the practice that lords-lieutenant of counties are appointed on the understanding that they were politically in sympathy with the Government of the day, he can state how many of the lords-lieutenant of counties in Ireland have been appointed by the present Government, and how many of them are in political sympathy with the present Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Five appointments to lieutenancies of counties in Ireland have been made since His Majesty's present Government came into office, namely, the Right Hon. T. Lough, M.P., County Cavan, Mr. J. Cooke, County Londonderry, Colonel M. T. Everard, County Meath, the O'Conor Don, County Roscommon, and Major Villiers-Stuart, Waterford County and City. I cannot say positively that all of these gentleman are in political sympathy with the present Government, but I sincerely hope that such is and will long continue to be the case.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the rules governing the appointment of lords-lieutenant of counties in Ireland; whether there is any property qualification; with whom the appointment rests; when the appointments are made and for what term; what are the duties of the position; whether a Catholic may hold the appointment, and, if so, how many Catholics have held the position during the past five years, and how many hold it now; and what are the powers of those holding the position with regard to the appointment of justices of the peace.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Lieutenants of counties in Ireland are appointed under the provisions of the Militia Act, 1882, by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, subject to the approval of the Crown. No property qualification is prescribed. The appointment is made by Letters Patent, and is held during the pleasure of the Lord-Lieutenant. The Lieutenant is head of the magistracy of his county, and has the power of appointing deputy-lieutenants for the county with the approval of the Lord-Lieutenant. No religious disability attaches to the post and there is no record of the religious denominations to which lieutenants belong. The appointment of justices of the peace rests with the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, to whom the lieutenants submit names of persons for appointment.

Purchase of Tenants' Holdings at Dunmore.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants of the town of Dunmore, County Galway, and its surroundings, are anxious to purchase their holdings, but have been unable to get in communication with the legal owner; and whether the Estates Commissioners can do anything to assist the tenants in this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have referred this Question to the Estates Commissioners for their consideration.

Grading of Irish School Teachers.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Irish national teachers, in several congresses held since the introduction of the new system in 1900, have claimed that teachers placed in grades lower than their classes should be placed in grades corresponding to their qualifications, as ascertained by examination, without having to fulfil the conditions of those who have not passed such examinations; and whether in this connection, he will consider the claims of teachers classed first-of-first, having the requisite average attendance in the allocation of the new grant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Resolutions on this subject have been received. The case of the particular teachers referred to is fully dealt with in my reply to the Question put by the hon. Member for North Donegal on 13th February last. As will be seen from that Answer, the Commissioners of National Education have already given special consideration to the case of these particular teachers, and therefore I cannot promise that any exceptional treatment will be given to them in the allocation of the supplementary grant.

Salaries of Irish School Teachers.

MR. MOONEY (Newry): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland is he aware that there are ten teachers in charge of schools with an average of over sixty, who completed a two years course of training in the year 1900 and are paid a salary of £70 per annum, exclusive of capitation grant and fees for extras; whether this is the ordinary salary of third grade; whether these teachers are losing upwards of £40 each annually; whether five teachers trained during the same year, and now in charge of schools with an average under sixty, are being paid a special salary by the Commissioners of National Education; and, whether, seeing that the Government are reconsidering the distribution of the Supplementary Estimate, he will take steps to set aside a portion of this grant to meet the claims of these ten teachers.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer the hon. Member to my Answers to his previous Questions on this subject. The Commissioners of National Education have repeatedly stated that the claims of the teachers referred to in the first part of the Question have been fully dealt with on the merits and that they are still prepared to consider any facts which may be brought to their notice in a particular case. In the circumstances, the reply to the last part of the question must be in the negative.

Army Service Corps Officers' Quarters at the Curragh Camp.

MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the officers' quarters of the Army Service Corps at the Curragh Camp are unsuitable and unhealthy; whether they have been so for some years; whether they have been medically pronounced to be dangerous to health through damp in the winter months and through lack of ventilation in the summer months; and whether it is now intended to press forward with the plans for new buildings at once so as to protect the officers concerned from the danger and discomfort of another winter spent in unsanitary quarters.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) These quarters are undoubtedly old and uncomfortable, but, as I have already explained to the hon. Member, are not unfit for habitation. Plans for new buildings are being pressed forward with all possible despatch.

Annual Leave to War Office Officials.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary of State for War what annual leave is granted to the civil clerks at the War Office who are in receipt of salaries above £350 a year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The annual leave granted to War Office clerks in receipt of salaries exceeding £350 a year is as follows—

Higher Division	Principals Assistant principals Clerks	36 days during first 10 years, 48 days afterwards.
Retired officer clerks, 48 days.		
Chief examiners and Staff clerks	36 days. 48 days after 10 years service as such, if promoted before 6th June, 1905.	

Woolwich Common—Area to be enclosed for Royal Army Medical Corps Buildings.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the area of ground which it is proposed to enclose for the purpose of the new buildings for the Royal Army Medical Corps at Woolwich; and what is the estimated outlay.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The area is about two acres and the estimated outlay £12,500.

Organisation of Public Departments.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury in how many cases during the last ten years have inquiries been made into the numbers and organisation of public departments under the powers given by Clause 16 of the Order in Council of 15th August, 1890, and what are the names of the departments so inquired into; and, if no such inquiry has been made, is it to be understood that the clause in question is now inoperative.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) Inquiries, both by means of Inter-departmental Committees and otherwise, are constantly being made into the pay and numbers of the various departments of the State; but, so far as I am aware, there have not been any during the last ten years which have been expressly authorised under the clause referred to.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Australian Commonwealth Naval Scheme.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if his attention has been called to the statement of Mr. Deakin that the Australian Government had got no reply of any sort from His Majesty's Government in reference to the proposals of Australia as to naval affairs, and that it had never been pointed out to Australia that her naval scheme was complex or required amplification; whether His Majesty's Government intended to offer Australia an alternative naval scheme; and whether, in view of the anxiety felt in the Commonwealth upon the subject, His Majesty's Government would, without loss of time, accept the proposals of Australia as to the establishment of an Australian Navy.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): Communications have passed between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor-General of the Australian Commonwealth, on the subject of the scheme put forward by the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth Government, and Mr. Deakin has been given to understand that the scheme presents considerable difficulties from the point of view of naval administration. With regard to the second part of the hon. Member's Question, the Admiralty would be content to allow the existing

Agreement to run its course. They are ready, however, to advise and assist the Commonwealth Government in regard to any proposals made by them, but, as already stated, these cannot be dealt with without careful deliberation.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Can the First Lord lay on the Table Papers dealing with this subject?

MR. McKENNA: I should like to look further into the matter; but if it is possible I shall do so.

Admiralty Contracts—Extension of Time for Labour Disputes.

MR. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have granted to their contractors on the North-East coast an extension of time for the completion of contracts.

MR. McKENNA: Certain shipbuilding contractors on the North-East coast have been granted an extension of time for the completion of their contracts on account of difficulties in connection with novelties of design. There are also certain contractors on the North-East coast who have given notice to the Admiralty of probable delays in their shipbuilding contracts owing to labour troubles, and an extension of time corresponding to the delay caused by such labour troubles may, if required by the circumstances of the case, be granted to them as provided in the contracts.

MR. HUDSON: May I ask if the provision in the contracts as to extensions of time relates to lock-outs as well as strikes? In considering this matter will he remember that this is a lock-out and not a strike?

MR. McKENNA: Yes, Sir. The hon. Member will observe that all I have said is that extensions may be granted "if required by the circumstances of the case." I have not stated there is an intention to allow it.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Government contracts are now being completed by an extra supply of apprentices who are doing the work which qualified journeymen did prior to the dispute? Is that in accordance with the terms of the contract?

MR. McKENNA: I am afraid I must have specific cases brought to my notice before I can answer the Question.

MR. CURRAN: I will give the names of the firms.

MR. McKENNA: Perhaps the hon. Member will put the Question down.

H.M.S. "Defence"—Wages of Engine-Fitters.

MR. HUDSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the firm of Messrs. Clark, Chapman and Company, Gateshead, are not paying the engine-fitters now engaged on H.M.S. "Defence" at Pembroke Dock in accordance with the fair wage clause; will he state what are the actual wages and lodging allowance paid to these men on this work sent from the Tyne district; and what action does he propose to take in the matter.

MR. McKENNA: The Admiralty is not aware of what wages or allowances are being paid to engine-fitters in the employment of Messrs. Clark, Chapman and Company, on board H.M.S. "Defence"; but the question will be referred to the firm for their observations.

Deptford Victualling Yard—Wages of Hydraulic Crane-Drivers.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will consider the desirability of placing the hydraulic crane-drivers employed in the Deptford Victualling Yard in the same position as regards their rate of pay as the same class of men employed under the Naval Stores Department in the Royal Victoria Yard, Deptford.

MR. McKENNA: The classes of men referred to are not analogous, as the men employed in the Victualling Yard are established and therefore entitled to pension, whereas those employed in the Naval Store Department are hired men only. It may be stated that the whole of the rates of pay in the Admiralty establishments in the London district are under the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

Wages for Skilled Labourers at Deptford and the West India Dock Stores.

MR. BOWERMAN: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the question of permitting the skilled labourers employed at the Deptford Victualling Yard and the West India Dock Naval Stores to participate in the increase of wages granted in April, 1907, to skilled labourers in all the Royal dockyards has yet been considered; and, if so, will he state the result of such consideration.

MR. McKENNA: This question is under the consideration of His Majesty's Government in connection with other matters affecting rates of pay in the London district.

MR. BOWERMAN: I have asked this Question on three previous occasions, and have each time received the same Answer.

MR. McKENNA: I regret we have not yet arrived at a decision.

MR. BOWERMAN: As these men believed they were intended to have the increase, will the right hon. Gentleman expedite consideration of the matter?

MR. McKENNA: I will certainly do my best.

Rosyth.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if the works at Rosyth are yet sufficiently advanced to be of any use to the large Fleet now assembled in the Firth of Forth.

MR. McKENNA: Only preliminary works have yet been begun.

MR. FELL: Are these works of no use in helping the Fleet to coal and water?

MR. McKENNA: The hon. Member fails to appreciate the fact that the contract has not even been let and no dockyard exists at Rosyth at the present moment.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could not expedite the works.

MR. McKENNA: The hon. Member seems to forget I have already informed the House that all expedition is being made.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) asked if the right hon. Gentleman considered seven years for the preliminary works expeditious.

MR. McKENNA: It is the same period the late Government thought desirable.

MR. FELL: Is there any truth in the statement in the papers that the works will not be continued this year?

MR. McKENNA: I have not seen that statement.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is not the Fleet getting on exceedingly well without this dockyard?

[No Answer was returned.]

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY asked the reason of the delay in letting the contracts.

*MR. SPEAKER said the Question did not arise out of the Answer.

Worcestershire and the Territorial Force.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state what was the numerical strength of the Yeomanry, Volunteer artillery, and Volunteer infantry, respectively, in Worcestershire on 1st January, 1908; what is the number of recruits who have joined since 1st January, 1908; and what is the number of Volunteers who have transferred to the Territorial Force.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The figures for non-commissioned officers and men (exclusive of permanent staff) are as follows—

	Strength 1st January, 1908.	Recruits to 1st July.	Transfers to Territorial Force.	Strength 1st July, 1908.
Yeomanry -	393	80	343	357
Artillery -	539	119	319	398
Infantry -	2,039	327	1,057	1,271

Wages at the Army Clothing Factory, Pimlico.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if steps are now being taken to revise the prices of garments made in the Army Clothing Factory at Pimlico; whether such revision will mean a substantial reduction in wages to the women; and, if so, whether he will receive a deputation of the women before such changes are actually effected.

MR. HALDANE: Prices paid to workers at the factory are liable to revision from time to time as alterations in pattern or process take place. There have been certain alterations in prices consequent on changes in process; these changes have not been great, and I am satisfied that they will not cause any substantial reduction in wages. Under these circumstances the matter would not appear to justify a deputation.

Fife and Forfar Yeomanry Camp—Degradation for Disobedience.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the circumstances attending the degradation for alleged disobedience of Private James Rennie, of the A Squadron of the Fife and Forfar Imperial Yeomanry at their annual training camp at Annsmuir, Ladybank, on 27th June; whether Rennie was taken under escort to the centre of the square and informed that he had been sentenced to be drummed out of the regiment, and was thereupon deprived of his cap and had the buttons and decorations cut from his tunic, and was thereafter marched outside the camp; what was the offence fo which this punishment was inflicted, and what opportunity had Rennie for defending himself; and what regulations authorise this form of punishment without trial.

MR. HALDANE: The Report called for has not yet reached the War Office.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I will repeat the Question on Thursday.

Territorial Brigade Majors.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether he can in any way improve the position of brigade-majors in the Army, seeing that they are to get the same pay as formerly for arranging a week in camp, and no regimental pay, but are to receive allowances of their rank in camp and an additional £50 for rent, clerical assistance, stationery, and postage, by which they are out of pocket unless their office is in their own house.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. and gallant Member, who is presumably alluding to the Territorial Force, appears to have lost sight of the fact that whereas previously brigade-majors received £100 a year, with £25 for stationery, office expenses, etc., and travelling expenses, they now receive in addition to the above £25 more for stationary, office expenses, etc., acting staff pay and allowance at camp, and their horse is provided and foraged at camp and conveyed where necessary at the public expense. It is intended that their office shall be in their own house as it has been in very many cases in the past. It is not, therefore, proposed to grant them any further additional emoluments.

Marriages in Military Chapels.

VISCOUNT DALRYMPLE (Wigton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the solemnisation of matrimony cannot be performed in unconsecrated military chapels without a special licence; whether there are instances in which licences to marry have been granted to unconsecrated civil chapels; and, if so, whether there is any ecclesiastical, legal, or military obstacle to granting licences to marry to all military chapels which are unconsecrated; and, if so, what are those obstacles.

MR. HALDANE: The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The rest of the Question raises problems which fortunately do not fall within the sphere of the Secretary of State for War. The military authorities do not regard with unfavourable eyes the celebration of marriage. For the difficulties to which the noble Lord refers he must reproach, first, the ecclesiastical and, secondly, the legal authorities.

MR. ASHLEY: If the ecclesiastical authorities give their consent, will the right hon. Gentleman concur?

MR. HALDANE: I should raise no difficulty of any sort or kind if there were no trouble with the Estimates.

Woolwich Arsenal—Discharged Workmen's Bonuses.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the practice of giving a cash bonus to the workmen discharged after long years of service from the Arsenal at Woolwich has been found to work satisfactorily; and, if not, whether he will organise a contributory pension fund among the workmen at the Arsenal to provide a subsistence for the workmen discharged during the interval which must occur between the time of their discharge and the time when they will be entitled to old-age pensions.

MR. HALDANE: It appears that on the whole the cash bonus system has worked fairly satisfactory, but there is no doubt that there is a strong feeling among the workmen in favour of a contributory pension fund. The schemes that have hitherto been put forward on their behalf do not provide sufficiently large contributions to prevent the fund from becoming insolvent after a few years, but I shall always be willing to consider any scheme put forward which is actuarially sound.

MR. FELL asked could not the War Office formulate a scheme?

MR. HALDANE said he would be quite ready to assist if the men were prepared to contribute.

Tinnevelly Sedition Trials.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the sedition case recently tried at Tinnevelly, in the South of India, in which Subramania Siva has been sentenced to ten years rigorous imprisonment and Chidambaram Pillay to transportation for life; whether he can state what the specific charges were in this case and by what Court the offenders were tried, and whether any appeal will lie to a higher Court.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The Government of India reported that the proceedings in question were instituted under Sections 124(*a*) and 153(*a*) of the Indian Penal Code, and that the result of the trial was as stated, except that the punishment was transportation in both cases. The charges are understood to have had reference to speeches in February and March last which preceded the serious rioting at Tuticorin and Tinnevelly. The case was tried before the Sessions Judge at Tinnevelly; an appeal lies to the High Court at Madras.

SIR H. COTTON: Is it not the fact that in one case the charge was sedition, and in the other merely abetment?

MR. BUCHANAN: I have given all the information we have received from the Government of India, and the hon. Member will probably be able to ascertain for himself whether it corresponds with the facts.

SIR H. COTTON asked if the Judge who tried the case was not assisted by two assessors, one European and one native, and whether, while the European found the accused guilty, the Indian assessor found them not guilty.

MR. BUCHANAN: I believe the two assessors did differ.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE: Is it not the fact that the riots had their origin in an attempt to boycott the Swadeshi Steamship Company and had nothing whatever to do with sedition or with the Government of India?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think that quite arises out of the Question on the Paper.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) asked whether the comprehensive rights of appeal provided by the law of India were ever denied to any class or nationality, whatever the offence committed.

MR. BUCHANAN: Certainly these two persons have full right of appeal.

Marriages in Military Chapels in India.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the solemnisation of matrimony cannot be performed in unconsecrated military chapels without a special licence; whether there are instances in which licences to marry have been granted to unconsecrated civil chapels; and, if so, whether there is any ecclesiastical, legal, or military obstacle to granting licences to marry to all military chapels in India which are unconsecrated; and, if so, what are these obstacles.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Secretary of State is advised that by the law in India an Anglican clergyman may solemnise a marriage in an unconsecrated building, provided it is a place where worship is generally held according to the forms of the Church of England. There appears, therefore, to be no necessity for a special licence in such cases.

MR. PIRIE: Can a Presbyterian at this moment celebrate matrimony in an Anglican Church?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think so.

MR. PIRIE: I will repeat that Question.

Gilbert Islands, Western Pacific.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if a petition has been received from residents in the Gilbert Islands, Western Pacific, praying for an investigation into the exploitations of the natives by European companies; and, if so, what action, if any, it is proposed to take.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): No petition has been received from residents in the Gilbert Islands.

Mr. Clark Kennedy and His Moorish Captors.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER - GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any statement with regard to the fate of Mr. Clark Kennedy, a British subject, in the hands of Moorish brigands.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Mr. Clark Kennedy has informed the British Vice-Consul at Tetuan that he has made terms with his captors and hopes to be free shortly.

Egyptian Ginning Mills—Employment of Young Children.

MR. HAWORTH (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether children from nine to fifteen years of age are at times employed in the ginning mills in Egypt as long as fifteen hours a day; whether overseers in such mills use whips to maintain discipline; whether the wages for such children are at the rate of 6d. a day; and, if so, what steps can be taken to remedy this state of affairs.

Sir EDWARD GREY: This question has formed the subject of inquiry lately. I am informed that the factories are open for a comparatively short period in the year. During this period there are some instances where the working day of children does extend to fifteen and a half hours, though there are intervals during this day. Wages are about 10d. to 1s. a day. There is no evidence to show that whips or sticks are ever used in the factories for striking the children; but the whole question of the work of children in factories is receiving the serious consideration of the Egyptian Government with the view of deciding what regulations are in themselves desirable, and how such regulations can be made applicable to European owners of factories.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Ought not the right hon. Gentleman to communicate that it is a savage thing that children should work fifteen hours a day when Egypt is under our protection?

Sir EDWARD GREY: The last part of my Answer shows it is not a question of whether any remedies are to be applied, but a question of how they can be made applicable to the owners of European factories not under our control.

Cotton Cultivation in Egypt.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the continuous decline in the yield of the cotton crop in Egypt, as admitted in Sir Eldon Gorst's recent Report, and considering that agriculture is the staple industry of Egypt and that a Department of Agriculture already exists in the Soudan, as in most civilised countries, he will advise the Egyptian Government to establish such a Department in Egypt.

Sir EDWARD GREY: There is no doubt as to the great importance of agriculture to Egypt; but the question whether the establishment of a special Department in Egypt is advisable is clearly one for the decision of the Egyptian Government, who alone can judge whether such a step would at present be justified from a financial point of view. The hon. Member will have noticed that, in Sir Eldon Gorst's Report which he cites, it is stated that the Khedivial Agricultural Society have appointed a committee of experts to examine the causes of the diminished yield of cotton.

Postal Rates between Egypt and England.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that the minimum rate of postage on letters from Egypt to England is still 1¼d., while the minimum rate from England to Egypt is 1d.; and whether, seeing that a stamp of the value of 1d. is already is use in Egypt for international postcards, and in view of the great and progressive increase in the postal revenue of Egypt, he will advise the Egyptian Government to establish reciprocity of postal rates between Egypt and England.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The principal reason against the establishment of reciprocity of postal rates between England and Egypt is a financial one. I shall have pleasure in furnishing the hon. Member with a copy of a Report drawn up in the Egyptian General Post Office in which the question is exhaustively treated.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: But is it not the fact that the Egyptian postal revenue is progressively increasing?

Sir EDWARD GREY: The amount at the disposal of the Government is dealt with in the Report, but it is not so large as the hon. Member seems to think.

Alleged Turkish Outrages near Van.

Mr. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to fresh massacres and outrages committed by Turkish troops in the neighbourhood of Van, at the village of Khatchen, under the pretext of searching for arms from the Armenian inhabitants, and to the fact that these outrages continued for ten days; that two women and seven men died as a result of bastinadoing, and that more than fifty women are now suffering from tortures inflicted by the troops; and that the Armenian population is seeking to emigrate *en masse* to escape further expected atrocities; and, if so, whether steps can be taken by His Majesty's Government to lodge a protest with the Porte to prevent any further outrages.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the tortures and cruelty and extortion recently inflicted by Turkish troops upon the Armenian inhabitants of the village of Khatchen, near Van, and the outrages upon the women of the village; whether this recrudescence of outrage coming after the massacres at Van in April last will induce the Government to prevent a general massacre of Armenians, such as occurred in 1895, by causing an immediate inquiry to be made by British consuls of the district into the action of the Turkish troops, or by taking such other steps as may influence the Porte to put a stop to the present atrocities?

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's Minister at Constantinople reports that he has heard of no atrocities at Khatchen, but that he is making inquiries of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the subject. There have been rumours that in the search for arms in the Garchicam district excessive severity has been used, and the attention of the Sublime Porte has been drawn to the matter, with the result that an inquiry is being made with a view to the punishment of the guilty parties should the rumours prove to be well founded.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon) asked if Papers connected with this part of Asia could not be laid, in view of the fact that it was long since the House had any.

SIR EDWARD GREY was understood to ask for notice.

AN HON. MEMBER inquired if it were not the fact that the perpetrators of these outrages were known and would energetic steps be taken to bring them to justice?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have said that inquiries are being made with a view to their discovery.

*MR. REES: What powers are there compelling the Porte to take action?

SIR EDWARD GREY: There are certain Treaty obligations.

Sacking of Persian Parliament Building.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the military operations which resulted in the sacking of the Persian Parliament house and the suppression of the Parliament were directed by Colonel Liakhoff; whether the orders received by this officer were sanctioned by a responsible Minister as provided by Article 45 of the Persian Constitution, to which the Shah of Persia has sworn to remain faithful; and, if not, whether the action of Colonel Liakhoff has the approval of the two Powers signatory of the Anglo-Russian Convention.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I do not know what part Colonel Liakhoff took in these events, nor have I seen the text of the Article of the Persian Constitution referred to; Colonel Liakhoff was in the employment of the Shah, and His Majesty's Government are not called upon to express any opinion upon the proceedings of the Persian Government which do not affect British interests.

MR. LYNCH: Will the right hon. Gentleman ask our Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran for a Report?

SIR EDWARD GREY: In any case we cannot be held responsible for the working of the constitution.

MR. LYNCH: But is it not necessary that an order issued by the Shah of

Persia should be countersigned by one of the Ministers ?

SIR EDWARD GREY: Article 45 does not deal with that part of the question. In any case the Persians must settle the matter on their own account.

Police and Native Languages.

CAPTAIN FABER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state whether it is obligatory for the police serving in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to talk the native language of those countries.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The conditions of service in each of the Welsh police forces are laid down by the local police authorities, with whose discretion in this matter I have no authority to interfere. I have no reason to doubt that the responsible authorities are fully alive to the necessity of ensuring that police officers should be able to speak the language current in the district where they are stationed. With regard to Scottish and Irish forces, the hon. Member should address his inquiry to the Secretary for Scotland and the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

CAPTAIN FABER: Will the right hon. Gentleman get rid of policemen who cannot speak these languages ?

MR. GLADSTONE: I can add nothing to my Answer.

The Imprisoned Suffragists.

MR. LEHMANN (Leicestershire, Market Harborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with reference to the case of the women now undergoing imprisonment for having taken part in the recent disturbances in Parliament Square, whether he can now see his way to consult with the magistrate who sentenced them with a view to the mitigation of their punishment.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Answer is in the negative.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman now answer the Question I put to him yesterday ? Do not these punishments go far beyond anything that has the sanction of public opinion ?

MR. GLADSTONE. I hardly think that is a Question which should be put to me.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this course of punishment is abhorrent to the feelings of this House, whose servant he is ?

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Why does the right hon. Gentleman refuse in these cases to make a representation to the magistrates when he made such a representation in almost similar cases before ?

MR. GLADSTONE: I have already answered that Question several times. It may be that originally I was rash in making the representation; but I made it under special circumstances, having regard to the fact that it was the first occasion on which the disturbances had arisen, and that in my judgment the omission of the magistrate to state the condition was accidental. But it is no part of my duty to interfere with the discretion of the magistrates.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): Are not these *quasi*-political offences, and is there any precedent for the punishment meted out ?

MR. GLADSTONE: Does my hon. friend suggest that political murder should not be punished ?

MR. ALDEN: I was alluding to precedents and I say I do not think there are any.

MR. LUPTON rose to put a further Question.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! Notice must be given of any further Question.

The Eight-Hour Working Day.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state to what other trades and occupations the Government proposes to extend the operation of the principle of the Coal Mines

(Eight Hours) Bill; and if it is proposed to introduce during the present session any legislation with this object, as foreshadowed in the recent speech of the President of the Board of Trade.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): In reply to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's Question, I do not remember having foreshadowed in a recent speech any addition to the legislative programme of the present session, which indeed at this season of the year is usually the subject of abridgment rather than of extension. In view of this fact, any reply to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's Question would be obviously premature.

MR. FELL: Is it not a fact that just before the division took place on the Miners' Eight-Hours Bill the right hon. Gentleman held out promises of extending the eight hours movement to other trades and industries?

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. Gentleman interrogated me on a matter of fact which can be decided by reference to the pages of *Hansard.*

Reduction of Postmen's Pay.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that at various post offices where the postmen's scales of pay are under consideration the pay given to outsiders who act as holiday and sick substitutes has been reduced by as much as 4s. a week, viz., from £1 to 16s.; and whether these substitutes, who are generally more than twenty-two years of age, ought to be paid at the rate laid down for entrants of that age by the Hobhouse Committee.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): If the hon. Member will furnish the names of the offices to which he refers I will have inquiry made.

London and the Necessitous Children Act.

MR. S. COLLINS (Lambeth, Kennington): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, seeing that the administration of the Necessitous Children Act has not proved to have been the success that was anticipated, owing to some of the authorities not availing themselves of the opportunity of adopting the Act, he will consider the advisability of amending the said Act as it applies to London, and make it compulsory instead of optional.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Answer given by my predecessor on 3rd March, to the effect that the extent of the Government programme this session precludes the possibility of considering the suggestion.

East Hardwick School.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board decided on 18th May, 1907, that it was necessary that a new school should be provided by the local education authority at East Hardwick; whether that decision has been, or is about to be, rescinded; and, if so, upon what grounds.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The decision of 18th May was that the council school which the local education authority proposed to provide was, in the circumstances, a necessary school. That decision has not yet been rescinded.

Board of Agriculture—Scheme for Encouragement of Horse Breeding.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is yet able to make any statement with regard to the steadily diminishing supply of horses throughout the country.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The Board's proposals are that a limited number of selected stallions and mares shall be registered. Their stock will subsequently be separately registered. In addition to service fee paid by owner of mare, the owners of stallions are to receive an additional fee for every registered mare in foal to a registered stallion. It is intended that help shall be given in special cases to owners of mares by payment or part payment of ordinary covering fee. Remount Department will arrange to inspect foals of registered sires and mares at three years old, and to purchase their annual supplies from amongst them. They will report all suitable foals not purchased by them to the Board for registration. Those purchased will be left with owners till wanted and payments will be made towards their keep till taken over. A Consultative Committee will be appointed to assist the Departments in carrying out the scheme.

MR. ASHLEY: Will provision be made in the Estimates next year for carrying this excellent scheme into effect?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: These are proposals and not a scheme. As regards provision being made in the Estimates, I must have notice of that Question.

MR. ASHLEY: Who is to decide whether these proposals are to be given effect to or not? Is it the Board of Agriculture?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: These proposals will, of course, have to come before the Treasury for sanction.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Is it not the fact that these remedial measures will benefit foreign Powers quite as much as our own people, and therefore for Army purposes the scheme is of no use?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I do not think so.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): Will the exportation of these horses be prohibited?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I think that is problematical.

Horse Poisoning at Wellington, Shropshire.

*MR. STANIER (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he can give any information as to the death of horses at Bennett's Bank, Wellington, Shropshire, when six horses died and others were taken ill during the week of 29th June; and whether the Board made inquiries as to the cause of death of the horses.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: From inquiry made it would appear that the cause of death in the cases to which the hon. Member refers was accidental poisoning.

*MR. STANIER: Are the Board making further inquiries, as I understand traces of arsenic have been found in one of the animals?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Yes, the matter is still being inquired into. The inquiries are not yet completed.

Ex-Soldiers and Sailors and Superannuation.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why His Majesty's Government refuse to consider the cases of ex-sailors and ex-soldiers affected by the decision of the Government under the Superannuation Act, 1859.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Answer given by my predecessor to my hon. friend the Member for Mile End on 3rd February last.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman reconsider the decision with a view to ascertaining if the number of men is large or small?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have nothing to add to the Answer.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Then does the hon. Gentleman propose to do nothing?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have given a reply to the Question.

Tobacco Growing in Scotland.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Government intend to make any grant to Scotland equivalent to the

£6,000 to be granted to aid tobacco-growing in Ireland.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have consulted my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer who wishes me to say that when a case can be made out in Scotland, as in Ireland, for encouragement to experiments in tobacco-growing the Government will be prepared to give it the same favourable consideration.

MR. COCHRANE: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that experiments have shown that tobacco can be successfully grown in Scotland?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I am afraid I can add nothing to the Answer.

Scottish Judges and Bank Directorships.

*MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can say, from Income-Tax Returns or otherwise, what payment, if any, is received by Judges of the Court of Session and by Sheriffs in Scotland for acting as extraordinary directors of the Scottish banks; and, if no payment is so received, will he say why His Majesty's Judges should occupy such positions in trading concerns which often litigate under their jurisdiction.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I beg to refer my hon. friend to the Answer given by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister to a similar Question put down by him on the 6th instant. I have nothing to add to that reply, except that the Income-Tax Acts expressly prohibit information being divulged with regard to any particular assessment.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Did the Prime Minister say anything as to the pay received by Scottish Judges as directors of these companies?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I think he pointed out that they received no salary or payment of any kind.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Are Scottish Judges precluded from taking part in any case in references to banks of which they act as directors?

MR. HOBHOUSE asked for notice of that Question.

*MR. WATT: Can the hon. Gentleman see his way to so increase the salary of Scottish Judges as to make it unnecessary for them to go into the paths of trade to earn a living wage.

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

Administration of the Old-Age Pension Scheme.

*CAPTAIN FABER: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will appoint paid solicitors, under the old-age pensions scheme, who will assist those in search of a pension to discover where they were born and how old they may be.

MR. HOBHOUSE (for Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE): No, Sir.

CAPTAIN FABER: Would a remonstrance behind the scenes, to use the words of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, have any effect.

MR. HOBHOUSE: No, Sir.

Carnane Estate, County Limerick.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say in what way is the Carnane estate, near Fedamore, County Limerick; has the Judge of the Land Court anything to do now in the management of it; and why has it not been divided before now, or when is it likely to be divided, or who is at present the agent or receiver.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners have furnished the owner with a preliminary estimate of the price they are prepared to give for the estate of Bertha Dillon which includes the lands of Carnane. If the offer should be accepted, formal proceedings for the sale will be instituted. The estate is not now under the control of the Land Judge's Court, nor, so far as I can ascertain, of any of the High Courts. The receiver over the estate is Mr. Peter Fitzgerald.

Prices of Consols.

Mr. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give the reason that the average price of the cost of purchase of Consols for Sinking Fund purposes during the year from the end of March, 1907, to the end of March, 1908, was £85 10s. per cent., and that the average price of Consols for that period was £1 2s. 6d. less, *i.e.*, £84 7s. 6d.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The bulk of the Sinking Fund money is issued to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt in the last quarter of the financial year. A comparison of the price paid during the quarter to 31st March, last, when Consols were considerably higher than in the previous nine months, with the average market price for the whole year is therefore misleading.

Mr. B. S. STRAUS asked if the Government could not so arrange matters as to buy when the market was cheap.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

Cooper Estate (Limerick) Evicted Tenants.

Mr. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether John M'Grath and the representatives of Thomas Barry have as yet been reinstated in their evicted farms on the Cooper property, near Knocklong, County Limerick; has the agent, Mr. Sanders, declined the offer and terms of the Estates Commissioners; and will the Estates Commissioners use the compulsory powers in the Evicted Tenants Act to put M'Grath and Barry back into their evicted lands.

Mr. BIRRELL: The evicted farms in these cases are in the occupation of a tenant, and, in the opinion of the Estates Commissioners, the Evicted Tenants Act is not applicable. The Commissioners have noted the applications for consideration in connection with the allotment of any untenanted land which they may acquire in the district.

Colonel Gascoigne's Kilfinane Town Tenants.

Mr. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say or ascertain from the Estates Commissioners what progress their inspector, Mr. Howard, made when in Kilfinane some weeks ago, in endeavouring to effect a sale between Colonel Gascoigne and his town tenants, inasmuch as arrangements are practically made for the sale to the farmers of their various tenancies; is he aware that there is on the estate, convenient to the town, some untenanted land worked by the estate bailiff; and will he see that the Estates Commissioners will endeavour in the interests of the town tenants to acquire this untenanted land and parcel it out between the poorest of the tenants, so as to give stability to the sale, as in the case of the poor tenants in the town of Cahirconlish.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that their inspector has completed his inquiries and furnished his report in this case. Practically all the agricultural tenants have signed agreements to purchase, but there is no likelihood that any arrangements can be made for the sale and purchase of the town tenants' holdings by means of advances under the Land Purchase Acts. The estate bailiff referred to is tenant of but fifteen acres of land, and even if this were divided among the town tenants, the security afforded by their holdings would be quite inadequate for the necessary advances under the Land Acts.

Cost of Extra Police in County Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number, and what is the cost, of extra police in the County Clare at the present time.

Mr. BIRRELL: The number of extra police at present serving in County Clare is seventy, and the charge upon the county is at the rate of a little over £200 a month.

Land Purchase in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the total number to date of land purchase transactions in County Clare, showing the number of tenants involved and the total amount of money advanced or for which agreements have been signed.

*MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that, as regards direct sales under the Act of 1903 in County Clare, purchase agreements have been lodged in respect of 3,601 holdings, comprised in 154 estates, the advances applied for amounting to £957,226. Of this amount, the sum of £170,562 has been advanced for the purchase of 667 holdings comprised in forty-three estates. Proceedings have also been instituted for the sale to the Commissioners of twenty-six estates, and they have so far entered into formal agreements for the purchase, for £79,471, of thirteen of these estates which are occupied by 195 tenants. In the case of eight of these estates the purchase money, amounting to £49,083 has been advanced, and the lands vested in the Commissioners.

Evicted Tenants in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the total number of evicted tenants in the County Clare at present and the number who have been provided with holdings or are about to be provided with holdings.

MR. BIRRELL: Up to 31st May last, the Estates Commissioners had received 413 applications from evicted tenants or their representatives for reinstatement in County Clare. In eighty-nine of these cases the applicants have been reinstated; 173 applications have been rejected; and seventy-nine cases are in process of being dealt with or are under the Commissioners' consideration. The remaining seventy-two applications were received subsequent to 1st May, 1907, and consequently they cannot be dealt with under the Evicted Tenants Act of that year, but will be inquired into by the Commissioners if and when the estates upon which the evicted holdings are situate come before them to be dealt with.

Labourers' Cottages in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of labourers' cottages erected in County Clare; and what is the number in course of erection, giving the names of the different unions.

MR. BIRRELL: On 31st March last, 518 labourers' cottages had been provided in County Clare, and 189 had been authorised but not yet provided. Since that date 453 additional cottages have been authorised. The Local Government Board are not furnished with particulars as to the number of cottages in course of erection, but it will probably be sufficient for the hon. Member's purpose to know that in all 1,160 cottages have been ordered, of which, as stated, 518 had been provided on 31st March. I will circulate with to-night's Votes a tabular statement showing the details for each union.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the information. Has he received complaints as to delays in publishing the result of these inquiries under the Labourers Act?

MR. BIRRELL: None have reached me.

Ballahaline Pier, County Clare.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what is the cause of the delay in the erection of the pier for the fishermen at Ballahaline, County Clare; whether the money has been long ago provided for this pier; and, if so, whether he will see that the work is at once gone on with in view of the necessity for providing proper accommodation for the fishermen to enable them to carry on their work.

MR. BIRRELL: This matter cannot be proceeded with until legislation has been passed extending the power of the county council to contribute to works of the nature in question. A Bill on the subject was introduced this session, but it was found impracticable to proceed with it, and the question of introducing an amended measure is now under consideration. It cannot be said that the money has been provided, so long as the county council have no legal power to make the necessary contribution.

Mr. HALPIN: May I ask whether it is a fact that in the 130 miles of the Clare coast there are twenty-two fishing hamlets with 226 canoes in which 675 men go to sea to make a living, and whether it is a fact that the Government have not up to this erected even one pier for the protection of those hardworking toilers of the sea?

Mr. BIRRELL: I am afraid I cannot carry the precise Answer to that Question in my mind.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what is the cause of the delay in the introduction of the second Bill, the first having been withdrawn? Is it not yet drafted?

Mr. BIRRELL: Yes; and the cause of the delay is the same as in the case of the first Bill.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: And was not the cause of the withdrawal a quarrel between two Irish Departments; and is that quarrel to be allowed to defeat a second Bill?

Mr. BIRRELL: The cause of the defeat of the last Bill was a difference of opinion between two Departments. The battle is still raging, and I hope it will soon be over.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is not the right hon. Gentleman head of the Board of Works?

Mr. BIRRELL: No; I have absolutely no control.

Mr. KILBRIDE: And are not the officials between whom war is raging Englishmen and Scotsmen?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that some years ago it was admitted that this pier could be built for the small sum of £1,100; that all the money has been provided with the exception of the portion to be given by the county council, which cannot be given until this Bill has been passed; might not the work be commenced with the money in hand and the county council contribution be given afterwards? It is very hard to keep these poor fishermen out of the pier.

Mr. BIRRELL: I think it would be rather dangerous to begin the work before the money is provided.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: The greater part of it is already available.

Cavan and Leitrim Railway.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in June 1903, the Leitrim County Council adopted a resolution declaring that an extension of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway to the Arigna mines, a distance of three miles, would, by largely increasing the output of coal and iron ore, develop the richest mineral district in Ireland and provide remunerative employment for hundreds of people in one of the poorest parts of the county; that a second short extension of the line from Dromod to Rooskey would provide an outlet for the coal and minerals to the districts bordering on the Shannon and would develop the cattle and tourist traffic; that these two extensions would provide immediate relief to the ratepayers in the guaranteeing areas of Leitrim and Cavan; and requesting the Government to make a free grant of £15,000 to effect these objects; whether he is aware that in May, 1905, the county council adopted a further resolution supporting the application of the directors of the railway for a larger subsidy, amounting to £24,000, towards the extensions of the line, and pointing out that they would materially relieve the ratepayers in the guaranteeing areas; if he is aware that in August, 1905, the late Government acceded to the application of the directors and the county council by making provision for a free grant of £24,000 for the purposes indicated, that the latter body in November, 1905, passed a resolution thanking the Government for the promised grant and expressing approval of the extensions, and that the project was also commended by the local Press of all shades of opinion, while in February, 1906, the county council adopted another resolution declaring its opposition to the scheme, in furtherance of which Parliamentary powers were then being sought, and which scheme in consequence of such opposition had to be abandoned by the directors; if he will state what were the reasons assigned by the county council for rejecting the scheme which it had previously so strongly advocated on the grounds set forth in the resolutions of June, 1903, and May, 1905; whether the Government has since taken any steps to remove the obstacle to the promotion of the Bill authorising the extensions; and whether the free grant for their construction is at present available.

MR. BIRRELL: The facts are generally as set forth in the Question. The arrangement made in 1905 was that the proposed grant of £24,000 should be made out of the Ireland Development Grant. The Estimates for 1905–6, 1906–7, and 1907–8, contained a provision on account, but owing to local opposition, and particularly to the opposition of the Leitrim County Council, the Cavan and Leitrim Railway Company did not proceed with the necessary Bill. The resolution of the county council in February, 1906, as reported in the Press, declared that the council would oppose the Bill because they had no guarantee to protect the ratepayers. Beyond this I have no knowledge of the council's reasons for rejecting the scheme. The Government did not take any steps to remove the local opposition to the scheme, nor were they called upon to do so, the matter being entirely one for the promoters of the Bill. In December last, when the Ireland Development Estimate for the current year was being settled, the promoters were informed that, as they had failed to obtain the necessary legislation, the offer of the Government must be considered as cancelled, and accordingly the proposed grant is no longer available.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): Arising out of the reply, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact that in this session of Parliament a Bill has been passed authorising the construction of a line of railway from Arigna to the port of Sligo; whether a company has been formed for the promotion of this scheme, and whether, if this company guarantees the construction of a line leading to the mines, the question of giving a grant-in-aid will be considered by the Government?

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

Limerick Postal Staff and Writing Duties.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will say why competent junior members of the rank and file at Limerick Post Office are not given a share of the temporary writing duties in the surveyor's and telegraph engineer's offices, seeing that officers from Cork, Belfast, and Dublin are frequently selected for such work.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If any officer at Limerick makes application through the usual channels for such employment, his application will be considered with those of others. At present none has done so.

Ballymena Postal Arrangements.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the resolution passed by the Ballymena Urban Council condemning the postal accommodation at Ballymena as totally inadequate for the proper and efficient transaction of business; and whether he will consider the advisability of providing Ballymena with a post office building and staff suitable to a town of its size and importance.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have received a copy of the resolution and am inquiring into the matter.

Headford (Galway) Postal Facilities.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the backward condition of the postal facilities at Headford, County Galway, which allows of only one mail daily; how long this arrangement has prevailed without any improvement, despite representations made some years ago for a mid-day service from Tuam; whether he would cause inquiries to be instituted respecting the desirability of establishing such a service; and would he consider if equal facilities might be accorded with advantage to Headford that obtain in a neighbouring service between Ballinrobe and Clonbern, which is exactly similarly situated.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will make inquiry on the subject and send the hon. Member a reply.

Sale of State Secrets.

*Captain FABER: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will state whether people living in Great Britain are, by going abroad to sell State secrets or plans to a foreign Power, exempted from prosecution except in the case of those wearing His Majesty's uniform.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): I regret that I do not understand the meaning of this Question. The law on the subject is fully and clearly set out in the Official Secrets Act.

*Captain FABER asked was it not clear that people could not be prosecuted for the offence if they went out of the country to sell State secrets?

Mr. ASQUITH said it was not at all clear. A British subject could certainly be prosecuted.

Welsh Church Commission.

Mr. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the final Report of the Welsh Church Commission will be available to Members before the Welsh Disestablishment Bill promised for next session is introduced.

Mr. ASQUITH: I regret that I have no information as to the date at which this Report may be expected to be available.

Purchases for the National Gallery.

Mr. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the fact that in 1886 the Treasury grant of £10,000 per annum for the purchase of paintings by the trustees of the National Gallery was suspended so that the cost of the Madonna degli Ansidei, by Raphael, and the equestrian portrait of Charles I., by Vandyck, at a total cost of £87,500, might be made good and that the grant since has been £5,000 per annum; and whether, in view of the increased competition and the consequent enhanced value of pictures worthy of the national collection, he will consider the advisability of granting in future years at least as much as that formerly given.

Mr. ASQUITH: I will confer with my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I do not think that he will find himself in a position at the present time to increase the grant for the purchase of pictures. The grant for the present year, as my hon. friend has no doubt observed, is £12,500.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) asked whether, in the event of the £5,000 not being expended in any one year, it could be carried over to the next year.

Mr. ASQUITH: Speaking from recollection, I rather think that is so.

EAST INDIA REVENUE ACCOUNTS.

Ordered, "That the several Accounts and Papers which have been presented to the House in this Session of Parliament relating to the Revenues of India be referred to the consideration of a Committee of the Whole House."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Resolved, "That this House will, upon Wednesday, 22nd July resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following

Members from Standing Committee B. (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. David Alfred Thomas, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Soares, and Mr. John Robertson; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Bethell, Sir Edward Strachey, Mr. Lyttelton, Mr. Remnant, and Mr. Dickinson.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C. (in respect of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill): Major McMicking and Mr. Alden; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. David Alfred Thomas and Mr. Menzies.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Standing Committee on Scottish Bills.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 227.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 227.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 320.]

NEW BILLS.

LAW OF MURDER AMENDMENT BILL.

"To classify Murders and to amend the law with regard to Suicide and Infanticide," presented by Mr. George Greenwood; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Dr. Shipman, Sir Maurice Levy, Mr. Snowden, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Swift MacNeill, Mr. Bright, Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Byles, Mr. Manfield, and Mr. Bertram; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 316.]

PROPERTY OF DECEASED PERSONS (DISCLOSURE) BILL.

"To compel bankers, solicitors, and others, having in their possession property of deceased persons and having notice of their death, to hand over same to the executors or other legal representatives or such persons," presented by Mr. Bottomley; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 317.]

NAVAL LANDS (VOLUNTEERS) BILL.

"To extend the Military Lands Acts to Naval Volunteers," presented by Mr. McKenna; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 318.]

IRISH EDUCATION ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend in certain particulars the Irish Education Act, 1892," presented by Mr. Hazleton; supported by Mr. Kettle, Mr. John Murphy, and Mr. Hugh Law; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 319.]

FINANCE BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) said that he moved to omit the words "or Ireland" because he wished for an opportunity of obtaining relief of a special and preferential character in Ireland. He was sorry that in order to justify his Amendment he would have to draw attention to the existence of the Act of Union, or the Act commonly called by that name. It was a document very little read, and less respected, and whilst they on those benches abused it in argument, its supporters had abused it in practice, and he was prepared to stake his eye that not more than a couple of his Unionist friends representing North East Ulster and other backwood districts of Ireland had ever read a single line of the Act of Union. He would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was, if he might say so, a fundamentally honest man, in small matters, whether, when he accepted the responsibility for the Finance Bill, he consulted the Act of Union. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that he was Chancellor of the Exchequer not only for Great Britain but also for Ireland, that his appointment was gazetted not only in the *London Gazette*, but in the *Dublin Gazette*, and that in the latter he was called the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, and, therefore, he should hold an equal hand between the two parties to this bargain. The portion of the Act of Union to which he wished to refer was the bargain which stood on the Statute-book at the end of Section 8, article 7, viz :—

> "And if it shall appear to the Parliament of the United Kingdom that the respective circumstances of the two countries will thenceforward admit of their contributing indiscriminately, by equal taxes imposed on the same articles in cash, to the future expenditure of the United Kingdom, it shall be competent to the Parliament of the United Kingdom to declare that all future expense thenceforth to be incurred, together with the interest and charges on all joint debts contracted previous to such declaration, shall be so defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes imposed on the same articles in each country, and thenceforth from time to time, as circumstances may require, to impose and apply such taxes accordingly, subject only to such exemptions or abatements in Ireland, and in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, as circumstances may appear from time to time to demand."

A portion of that Article had been put into practice and a more important part of it had never been put into practice; and if they had either a Constitution or a Court of Constitutional Law which stood above this House he was certain that there was not a single Finance Bill which had been passed by the House since the Act of Union that would not have been declared to be null and void in its Irish clauses, and very likely some Irish Chancellors of the Exchequer would have been hanged. But that Article dealt with certain exemptions and abatements which were to be made in the case of Ireland. They always had a certain number of exemptions. For instance, in Ireland they did not pay the stamp duty on patent medicines, and he supposed the theory of that exemption was that Ireland would be so depressed by the present system of government that she would need some patent tonics for the revival of her constitution. Further, they did not pay the Inhabited House Duty, and they did not pay the English Land Tax. Those exemptions conceded the principle for which he was contending. Of course, it was true that the total amount of those exemptions, calculated on the basis of English and Scottish figures, was between £80,000 and £100,000 a year. What he asked for in his Amendment was that in addition to those exemptions there should be abatements, and that the tea duty, which was to be fixed at 5d. in the £ in Great Britain, should be fixed at 2d. in Ireland, and he put them forward on two grounds. If the right hon. Gentleman had read the Act of Union, he was certain he would accept the Amendments. They would reduce the total volume of taxation paid to the Imperial Exchequer by Ireland, and if they took Ireland in relation to herself they would diminish the proportion of indirect to direct taxation in that country. He would like to refer the Committee to the Report of the Financial Relations Commission, which was appointed by the last Liberal Government in 1894. Motions founded on the unanimous Report of that Commission had been moved in that House and supported in the division lobbies by the majority of the Members of the present Cabinet, including, if he was not mistaken, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The net effect of the Report of that Commission was that they said substantially that the financial theory of the Act of Union was that after the Union, Ireland and Great Britain should contribute to the Imperial Exchequer each in proportion to its capacity, and that they should receive each in proportion to its needs. The Commission further found that at that time the total value of taxation paid by Ireland was one-eleventh of the whole taxation of the United Kingdom, whereas at the very highest estimate, that which was the most unfavourable to Ireland, it should have been one-twentieth. What was the record of the Liberal Government in the matter of Irish taxation since the election of 1905, which they were told at the time was the greatest election of modern times, and returned the greatest Government by the greatest majority, founded upon the most approved moral and democratic principles? Their record for the first year was this. For 1906–7 the total revenue raised in Ireland was £43,000 more than it had been in the last year of reactionary Toryism; in 1906–7 it was £9,490,000, against £9,447,000 in 1905–6, and he was sorry to say he found himself speculating now as to why he shared in the general rejoicing at the defeat of Toryism at that election. He would apply the findings of the Financial Relations Commission in arguing for a reduction of the total taxation of Ireland. If she had contributed one-twentieth she would have contributed only £7,500,000, as against her actual contribution of £9,500,000; in other words, for 1906–7 she was overtaxed by nearly £2,000,000. If she had contributed on the basis of one-twenty-fifth, which was the estimated ratio of her wealth to that of Great Britain according to a majority of the Commission, she would have contributed only £6,000,000, so that on that basis she was overtaxed by £3,500,000. If the Finance Bill passed through in its present form, and if they applied to it the unanimous findings of the Financial Relations Commission, Ireland for 1908–9 would, on one of these alternative bases, pay £1,600,000 more than she ought, and on the other £3,100,000 more. He expected the reply to that would be the familiar reply of the hon. Member for Preston, that they must take the taxation per unit of population, and that they would then find that no person in Ireland paid more, but that the taxation per head of the population was rather less than in Great Britain. That was undoubtedly so, and if the hon. Member for Preston, who had already committed himself to that opinion in the previous session in connection with certain questions, took that view, it would not be the first time that he had been brilliantly wrong about financial subjects. Views of that character might be good enough for primitive Radicals, but he did not think they ought to be accepted by the Committee. If they accepted for the moment the unit of population test, and if they complemented it by another test, the test of the taxable capacity of the unit of population in Ireland, they would find these figures. The average total income per head of the population of Great Britain was about £45 per annum, and in Ireland about £19. If they corrected that by deducting from it the £15 a year which ought to be set down for cost of subsistence, they were left with a free taxable income in Great Britain of about £30, and in Ireland of only £4. He submitted that on the basis both of the Act of Union and of common justice, they were left, under the Act of Union, with the theory that they ought to tax according to the capacity of the two parties to the bargain, and according to these figures they were left with an income of only £4 in one case and £30 in the other case. From whom was the tea tax going to be drawn in Ireland? It was a part of that enormous burden of indirect taxation in Ireland which made the financial system of that country absolutely and radically unsound. If there was one principle accepted and acted upon by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain, it was to preserve a substantial equality between direct and indirect taxation. At the present time the proportions in Great Britain were practically half and half, but in Ireland the proportions were 72 per cent. indirect and only 27 per cent. direct taxation. Those figures worked out at an average tea tax of about 3d. a week for every family of five persons in Ireland The tax was going to fall on the poor people. They were constantly told that it was because they happened to be poor in Ireland that they suffered from this special burden of taxation; they were told that if they took class for class in Great Britain and Ireland, the burden was no heavier in Ireland. Let them take the most prominent and typical class in Ireland, the class of agricultural labourers. Mr. Wilson Fox, a Board of Trade expert, conducted an inquiry into the relative positions of the agricultural labourers of Great Britain and Ireland three years ago. He found that the average weekly earnings of an agricultural labourer were in Scotland 19s. 3d., in England 18s. 3d., in Wales 17s. 3d., and in Ireland 10s. 11d. He found that in county Mayo, in the centre of the congested district, the average weekly wage of an agricultural labourer was 8s. 9d.; and it was from the Mayo labourer, with 8s. 9d. a week upon which to face the world and rear a family, that the right hon. Gentleman was going to take 3d. a week in the shape of a tea tax. In January this year another Board of Trade inquiry into the relative condition of the industrial classes in the great towns of Great Britain and Ireland was conducted, and the net result of the report was that in every one of the few great cities in Ireland the condition of the labourer was worse, the average wage of trades lower, the housing conditions poorer, and the general outlook blacker, than for the corresponding classes in the great towns of Great Britain. It was these two classes, the poor people in the congested districts and the Irish towns, who were going to pay the tea tax in Ireland. He did not want to labour the point. Anybody who had been in the typical parts of the west and middle-west of Ireland knew what that meant in actual work, but he would venture to read to the Committee a few words expressing the opinion of a Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland, a man whose experience and authority on this subject carried very great weight in Ireland. Mr. Micks, in his evidence before the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, used these expressions—

> "There are two classes in the congested districts mainly—namely, the poor and the destitute; there are no wealthy people, except traders. Nearly all inhabitants are on one dead level of poverty. Their dietary is almost altogether vegetable. They have at one meal a day a little salt fish or a very small piece of some coarse American bacon as a sort of relish with their food—that is, those who can afford it, but the majority of the people have nothing but vegetable diet such as Indian meal or oaten porridge, potatoes and bread baked by themselves or sometimes by the baker, from flour. They also drink tea to a very large extent."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, whatever attitude he assumed on this question, ought to realise that these were the people who were going to be hit by this special clause of the Financial Bill. It was urged before the Financial Relations Commission that there would be enormous adminstrative difficulties resulting from the setting up of a different tea duty between Ireland and Great Britain, but frankly he could not see where the administrative difficulties would come in. There were Customs officials at the three great ports of importation—Belfast, Dublin, and Cork. The total contributions of Ireland to the tea tax in 1906-7 was £552,000, of which no less than £306,000 was actually collected in Ireland as well as contributed there, and the effect of the Amendment would simply be that the whole amount contributed would also be collected in Ireland. He could not for the life of him see the smallest shadow of difficulty in Customs administration. At present if tea imported into Ireland was re-exported to England it would naturally pass through the Customs at the English port of entry without questions asked. The duty would have been paid in Ireland. If they made a distinction between Ireland and Great Britain the effect would simply be that bills of lading would not be a guarantee that the duty had been paid. They could collect the duty on tea re-exported from Ireland as they now collected it on goods re-exported from any other country. Another argument against a reduction of the duty in Ireland was that it would lead to more extended drinking of tea, which would result in the physical deterioration of the population. A great many medical authorities who wrote upon the subject of the growth of tuberculosis and insanity in Ireland ascribed it in some measure to the extending use of tea. If they found an increasing consumption of tea going on side by side with an increase in the statistics of tuberculosis and insanity, it would suggest that perhaps there was some connection between the two sets of figures. But the amount of tea consumed in Ireland, as shown by the Revenue figures, was not increasing but declining. The Chancellor of the Exchequer got £552,000 from Ireland on a 5d. tea duty in 1906–7. In 1899–1900 he got £12,000 more upon a 4d. tea duty. Therefore, the amount of tea consumed in Ireland in 1906 showed a very marked diminution indeed as compared with the amount consumed in the year before the war, when the tea tax was a penny lower than now. If one developed the argument that a reduction of the duty would lead to increased consumption of tea, and that that was not from a physical point of view a desirable thing, he would respectfully put it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the fact that a man differed from him on a rather vague and disputable subject was not a sufficient reason for arranging taxation so as to rob. In the matter of tea drinking he preferred to take his stand with Alexander Pope and Dr. Johnson. He remembered that Dr. Johnson was accustomed to consume something like seventeen cups of tea at a sitting, and his intellect was so enlightened by this diet that when he was consulted by a prominent Irishman of the day on the project of a union with Great Britain he said—

> "Let Ireland never unite with Great Britain, for if she does we shall rob her."

If the argument of the physical effect of drinking tea was put forward, he hoped it would not be by a Member who had just come from the Terrace, for he would have been ruining his own constitution, which was deplorable, and corrupting his brains, an occupation in which no Member of the House ought to be engaged. The effect of the proposed reduction of tea duty upon the total revenue of Ireland would be very slight and scarcely perceptible. It would leave the Chancellor of the Exchequer his £1,250,000 out of Irish tobacco, and let him say on that point that the small grant and abatement he had made on Irish tobacco appeared infinitesimal in comparison with the general figures of Irish taxation. The reduction of the tea duty, and the abolition of the sugar tax, which he proposed to move later, and which, no doubt, the right hon. Gentleman would accept, had always been accepted by Liberals when in opposition. The effect of the acceptance of the Amendment would be to reduce the yield of the duty by about £300,000 a year. They would not touch the £1,250,000 drawn from Irish tobacco, or the £3,600,000 from alcohol. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not only continue to draw it, but would increase the tax on that dangerous commodity. The total effect of accepting this and the other Amendments he proposed to move, and of the right hon. Gentleman's signalising his entrance into office by passing the first Finance Bill founded on the Act of Union, would simply be that in 1908–9, Ireland, instead of paying £3,000,000 more in taxes than she ought, would only pay about £1,900,000 more. The Government had not diminished, but had increased the taxation of Ireland, and he asked them to say whether they accepted or repudiated the findings of the Financial Relations Commission. If they repudiated them, the Committee would be glad to know upon what grounds, and if they accepted them, the Committee would be equally glad to know what they proposed to do about it.

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 1, line 22, to leave out the words 'or Ireland.'"—(*Mr. Kettle.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Burghs) said the hon. Member in his witty speech had reminded him that he was Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland as well as Great Britain, and referred him to the *Dublin Gazette* for confirmation of the statement. He did not think any Chancellor of the Exchequer need take the trouble to peruse the *Dublin Gazette* in order to realise that he had financial relations with Ireland. Hardly a day passed without a reminder. For every demand that came from Great Britain he thought he could safely say three came from Ireland. He did not think that that was an opportunity for discussing the question of financial relations, and he was certain it was not the best opportunity for redressing it. But he could not quite realise the grievance of the hon. Member. He complained, first of all, that although the tea duty was reduced by one penny a pound, still Ireland was so much more prosperous under a Liberal Government that she returned £43,000 more for revenue. That was not attributable to any increase of taxation. In spite of the decrease of one penny in the pound duty Ireland contributed £43,000 a year more.

MR. KETTLE said it was an increase of one penny and Ireland paid £12,000 less in tea duty than she paid before the war. She was paying now fivepence, and then she was paying fourpence.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not think any Chancellor of the Exchequer was in danger of forgetting his responsibilities in connection with Ireland. For every demand that came to him from Great Britain it was safe to say three came from Ireland. He did not regard that as a proper occasion for discussing the great issue raised by the Report of the Financial Relations Commission. The hon. Member had complained that, although the tea duty had been reduced by 1d. per lb., Ireland was so much more prosperous under a Liberal Government that £43,000 more revenue was obtained. He would not have thought that a real grievance against the Liberal Government. Ireland had certainly benefited to the extent of the reduction of 1d. made by the Liberal Government when they came into office. They also reduced sugar by 1d., and the circumstances of Ireland were such that whenever relief was given to indirect taxation Ireland benefited to a much larger degree than any other part of the United Kingdom. Then they were making provisions for old-age pensions, and there again Ireland would receive a much larger benefit than any other part of the United Kingdom, for reasons which he need not go into. Therefore, this Government had done something to readjust the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland in the direction of benefiting Ireland. He was not going to remind the hon. Member of the many demands made upon the Exchequer which they had seen their way to concede, neither would he enter into the whole question of the financial relations between the two countries. It was perfectly clear that if the Government made up their mind to deal with this question of the financial relations the Amendment was not the way to do it. They could not deal with it by having one tea duty in Ireland and a higher one in Great Britain. The inconvenience was obvious, and such a differentiation would lend itself to all possible frauds on the revenue in Great Britain. They would have to set up a costly system of defence against the coasting trade with Ireland. Ireland, he reminded Irish Members, enjoyed certain special benefits in the way of taxation; there were no assessed taxes, no house duty, no land tax; there were three or four separate heads of taxation which did not apply to Ireland at all. In addition to all that, the reductions in taxation which this Government had effected during the last two years had given substantial benefit to Ireland. Of course he admitted that Ireland was a poor country, and, whenever they got a poor district, whether in Ireland or the west coast of Scotland, or in other parts of Great Britain, they would find the poor paying a higher proportion of the cost of government than any other class of the community. It was not so much a problem of two countries as a problem of two classes. As a matter of fact, Ireland had gained more by this Budget, which was the object of attack by Irish Members, not only in taxation, but in beneficial expenditure, than any Budget he could remember. He invited hon. Members from Ireland to challenge that statement. He could not possibly accept this Amendment because he could not afford it. This particular Amendment would cost £220,000, and taken in conjunction with another Amendment which the hon. Member had on the Paper a very considerable sum was involved. This could not be done, and if it could be done this was not the way to do it.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the same old story, for he had told them that this was not the time or opportunity for such a proposal, and this was hardly the place to make it. This question was one which went to the very root of the prosperity of the Irish people. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to have ignored the fundamental distinction upon this question between Ireland and the different parts of Great Britain. In Great Britain there was no Act of Union which differentiated them from other parts of the Kingdom, and consequently there was no binding contract upon them as was the case in Ireland. The figures which his hon. friend had given were very striking indeed. He had alluded to the decreasing contribution of this country to general taxation, and on that point his hon. friend gave some very convincing figures. If they went back for ten years they would find that Ireland had been paying an increased contribution year after year, and by the system of set-offs in regard to expenditure the more money drawn from Ireland the more she had to contribute towards the general taxation or revenue. They might go on debiting Ireland in this way simply by doubling the cost of the police or the salaries of the Judges, to which the majority of the peeple of Ireland were opposed. The tea tax was one of the few ways in which it was possible for an Irish representative not only to bring the whole question of financial relations before the Committee, but also to show how the tea tax pressed so much more heavily on Ireland than on this country. The average wage all the year round of the agricultural labourer in Ireland was nearer 8s. than 10s. a week, and, therefore, if they considered the amount of tea and sugar he consumed he paid taxation enormously out of his proper proportion. The lower they went down the scale the more disproportionate and the more unfair was the system of taxation. He was quite familiar with the arguments put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which were really a re-echo of the words of the late Sir William Harcourt.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer still considered himself a good Radical. He was old enough to remember that one of the great aims of the Radical Party was "a free breakfast table." He was not sure that Mr. Gladstone did not inscribe it on his banner at one time. [AN HON. MEMBER: "It was Chamberlain."] If that were adopted, Ireland would benefit. The Irish were economists, and if the people of this country were not willing to practise economy by the restriction of expenditure, that was their own affair. The reason why the Government could not reduce the taxes on tea and sugar, the breakfast table commodities, was because they were spending so much more than was spent in former times. They did not want such a swollen Budget in Ireland. The people of that country had contributed to the indirect taxation far beyond their means and far beyond what they ought to pay; and the money was drawn from the very poorest of the population. The working classes in this country were very much better off than in Ireland, and they had at their command more of the comforts and luxuries of life. They could use commodities like meat and beer which the poorer classes in Ireland were debarred from using. Those were commodities which the Irish could not afford, especially in the West of Ireland. In the case of a poor Irish family of five the tea duty at the present rate represented an annual charge of 13s. 3d. or 13s. 4d. That was a very large amount to pay in taxation for what had become practically a necessity of life. To the working population of Ireland tea was a necessity and not a luxury, and they had to pay a disproportionate share of the taxation on that commodity. What he meant was that the tax was out of all proportion to the means of those who paid it. The poor of Ireland who were large consumers of tea were the poorest in the three kingdoms making up the so-called Union. Provision was made in the Act of Union for special abatements and that fact had been airily treated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the difficulty of the Customs House. He and his friends could not see where that difficulty arose at all. Tea was moved about in bulk in large quantities, and it would not be suggested that the revenue would suffer by the illicit importation of tea in the same way as it would suffer if ladies were permitted to bring in duty free from the Continent lace and other dutiable commodities. It would not be practicable to injure the revenue in that way. Custom House regulations were now in operation in regard to whisky and other articles, and it would be a simple matter to lay down such regulations as would utterly prevent the smuggling which the Chancellor of the Exchequer apprehended. He thought a strong case had been made out for reducing the tea duty in Ireland and he trusted that a majority of the Committee would recognise that a fair and legitimate claim had been put forward.

*MR. GWYNN (Galway) associated himself with the appeal made by his hon. friends for a reduction of the tea duty. He recognised that this was, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, a very good Budget for Ireland, but only because Ireland was poor. If poverty was a qualification the people of Ireland were always well qualified. In Ireland there was only one article that ranked lower in the scale of necessaries than tea, and that was bread. People in Ireland had tea who did not get milk. Meat was a luxury in Ireland. If meat were taxed, there might be a nearer approximation to equality of taxation between the countries. The people of Ireland, so far as the poor were concerned, were not a meat-using people at all. That was why the tea tax was so enormously far reaching in its effect. It reached to the last sixpence of the poor. He did not think the drain on this country was proportionately felt. Ireland being a poor country, the mass of the people never paid anything in taxation except what they paid by indirect taxation. For them taxation at present stood at a war level. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the case was identical in both countries. The poor people in this country were badly hit by the tea tax, but not so much as the poor people in Ireland. The poor people in this country did gain something by the expenditure made by the Government in dockyards and in other ways, but he would like to know how the expenditure of the money raised by the tea tax was going to profit Connemara. What did Connemara stand to gain by it? Connemara was only affected by the Imperial expenditure of America. If the people of that district sought work they flew from the British flag. The Union Jack was of no value to them. This enormous tax was raised to maintain the Union Jack, which was worthless to Ireland. These were the grounds on which they claimed differentiation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had never heard of the differentiation clauses in the Act of Union. When that Act could be construed to the advantage of Ireland, its clauses were dead letters. They had passed out of English memory altogether. The Act of Union was, nevertheless, a historical document, and it showed what was in the minds of the people who had framed the Union. After all, they were statesmen who recognised that the conditions of Ireland were fundamentally different from those of this country.

Mr. HAZLETON (Galway, N.) said he had listened with very great disappointment to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he was certain that the speech would be received with the same disappointment in Ireland as it had been by his colleagues of the Nationalist Party. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the demands on the Exchequer from Ireland were three times as numerous as from the rest of Great Britain. He did not think that carried the Chancellor of the Exchequer very far, for two reasons. In the first place the money which they had claimed was their own, and in the second place most of the demands they had made had been refused. The right hon. Gentleman said that this was not the way in which to redress the financial grievances under which Ireland was suffering at present, but he had not told them how he proposed to redress the grievances which he and his Government acknowledged to exist. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that this was the best Budget that had been introduced for Ireland during the time he had been in the House, but still the fact remained that the finding of the Royal Commission had not been seriously disputed either by the Government or by their supporters. It was their duty, if they accepted the Report of that Commission, to take some action with respect to it. What he and his friends wanted to know was when the Government were going to put into practice the principles they professed to hold. This was essentially a question which a Liberal Government could deal with, and ought to deal with, without delay, because the House of Lords could make no alteration in a Finance Bill; and as long as the Government allowed this grievance to exist they could not ignore their responsibility. His hon. friend the Member for Galway had said that this was an academic Amendment. He was not quite so sure of that fact. It proposed to do away with the tea duty in Ireland, but his friend had pointed out that the machinery for doing that practically existed in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that no great difficulty would be encountered in acting on his proposal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the Amendment would deprive him of more than £200,000, which he could not afford. But he would point out that the Finance Bill had not yet passed through Committee, and there was ample opportunity at a later stage of finding another way to raise the £200,000. The right hon. Gentleman had also referred to the benefit which Ireland was going to receive under the old-age pensions scheme. That was not the time to discuss that measure, but he would point out that if they in Ireland had a Parliament of their own in College Green, Dublin, he did not believe they would spend from £700,000 to £1,000,000 on old-age pensions when there were so many other grave and pressing problems confronting the Irish people. Considering the unsatisfactory reply that they had received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he hoped his hon. friend would press his Amendment to a division, and that it would receive the support of all those Members of the Committee who recognised that Ireland had been unfairly treated in this matter.

Mr. KETTLE said that before going to a division he would like to say a brief word in reply to the case made by the

Mr. Gwynn.

Chancellor of the Exchequer. That right hon. Gentleman did not attempt to repudiate the official figures which he had quoted, and the effect of which the right hon. Gentleman did not in any way counter. His hon. friend the Member for Galway had said that this was an academic Amendment. No doubt it was, in the sense that the Government would put up their Whips and defeat it with their usual academic majority. But the Amendment was not introduced for the mere purpose of raising a discussion on the financial position of the Government. That was one of the very few occasions when the House had to put the Second Article of the Act of Union into operation to make an exemption in favour of Ireland. He wondered if the Chancellor of the Exchequer bore in mind the paragraph in the Report written by the Chairman of the Financial Commission and adopted by five members—

> "It was never intended that the ratio of contribution or the extent of the exemptions and abatements (as the case might be) should be affected by consideration of the relative cost of administration in each of the three kingdoms."

That was precisely the argument used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that afternoon. It had been said that this was the best Finance Bill which had been brought before the House for many years, and they were told that Ireland would gain by the reduction of the sugar tax the sum of £340,000 or almost precisely according to the proportion of the population of Ireland to Great Britain. But Ireland would gain nothing from the reduction of the sugar tax which the consumer in Great Britain would not also gain; and therefore the relief to the consumer in Great Britain and in Ireland would be absolutely the same. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that if he continued to reduce Irish taxation and increased expenditure in Ireland he would soon come to the point in which more money would be spent in Ireland than was received from Ireland. That was the effect of the right hon. Gentleman's argument. All he could say was that the Act of Union was intended to give advantages to a poor country like Ireland for bringing it into association with a rich country like England; and that that was the first occasion on which the representatives from Ireland asked for exemption from the tax on tea, which was an article of general consumption in Ireland. The attitude of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in rejecting the Amendment resulted from the fact that he could not administer the Act of Union in a way that was justifiable.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he wished to support the protest which had been made by the hon. Member for Tyrone against this duty on tea in Ireland. Almost every year without exception for the past quarter of a century the Irish Members had had debates of this kind, but they had invariably got the same reply and they had never been able to carry their views to a successful issue in the division lobbies. Nevertheless, they were bound to continue making their protest. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would be the last man to object to their doing so at the present time. But in any case, whether the right hon. Gentleman objected or not, their protest would continue to be made as long as the Irish Members came to the House. Sometimes they were told very untruly and, he thought, very wickedly, that the consumption of alcohol in Ireland was a great deal more than it should be; but, as a matter of fact, statistics proved that it was considerably less than in England or Scotland. Many hon. Members who came from Ireland thought that the less alcohol that was consumed the better it would be for the people; but what encouragement was it to the Irish people to refrain from using alcoholic beverages when they found that the only substitute of any use whatever for alcohol was so taxed by the British Government that it became one of the dearest articles which they could consume? Even from the point of view of temperance, it was a crying shame to make tea as dear as it was under this tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a somewhat half-hearted manner, had spoken of the great advantage which Ireland enjoyed because of her connection with Great Britain. They were told that they ought to be extremely grateful because under the protection of this country, under the British flag, the Union had brought them any amount of benefits. The Union had brought, at any rate, dear tea. Since Great Britain thought fit to go to war with the Boers the poor people of the county of Clare had had to pay a great deal more for their cup of tea. He thought it would be wise to recognise—what every reasonable and common-sense man had recognised—that it was a monstrously unjust proposition to say that anything which the people of this country said ought to be done should also be forced on the people of Ireland. The people there were called upon to pay this tea tax of 5d. per lb. which was more than they paid before the war in South Africa. With that war the Irish people had absolutely nothing to do. Nobody knew better than the present Chief Secretary that the Irish people disapproved of that war at every stage in the House of Commons. He would remember that they sang "Good Old Kruger" with as much gusto as hon. Gentlemen above the gangway sang "God save the King." In those days many hon. Members opposite joined the Irish Members in their protest against the war. The war took place, and they in Ireland found that the necessaries of life were at once rendered a great deal dearer. Now that the war was over they had a relic of it staring them in the face every day, and the poor people of Ireland were called upon to pay more for their tea. Was it unreasonable for the Irish Members to expect that, the war being over and the expenditure upon it at an end, their constituents should pay for such a necessary article as tea the same price as they paid before the war? He knew of no instance which illustrated more completely the disadvantages which Ireland was under, because of the present condition of her connection with this country, than this matter of the tea duty. He hoped his hon. friend would go to a division and that he would receive the support of every Irish Member and of a great many of those in the House who thought that if wars were to be paid for they ought not to be paid for by taxing a necessary article of food. Some people talked as if tea was a luxury. He insisted that tea in Ireland was the most necessary article of diet the people had. They did not drink beer as they did in this country. They could not afford it; and they did not take meat. In Ireland they practically lived on bread and tea. To him it was a most pathetic thing to see, day after day and month after month, on the tables of the small farmers and poor people in the country at every meal little else but dry bread, potatoes and tea. Yet tea was the article that was taxed. A penny per pound might seem very little to rich people, but the hardest thing about the duty was that it fell hardest upon the poor people, who bought their tea by the two pennyworth and three pennyworth at a time. Those people were charged appreciably more directly the duty on tea was increased. He was sorry the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not see his way to meet his hon. friend's demand, because he knew what the right hon. Gentleman must feel and know the justness of the claim that was made. The right hon. Gentleman must understand how very hardly this matter fell upon the poorest people, yet the circumstances by which he was surrounded prevented him from meeting the claim, as he otherwise would wish to do. Irish Members were bound to make their protest, and did so most strongly, on behalf of the Irish people, against their being called upon at this time to pay for a war in which they had no part.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.) congratulated the Chancellor of the Exchequer on having so soon acquired the method of the calm and official answer, in which he now equalled his predecessor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire. One would have thought from the right hon. Gentleman's speech—which, after all, was a very half-hearted speech—that Ireland ought to be this year at least a happy country indeed. One penny had been taken off a war tax on tea, and in consequence Ireland ought to be the happiest of happy countries. He might inform the Committee that the indirect taxation in Ireland, so lightly treated by the right hon. Gentleman, was a very heavy burden on the country, a country which suffered most from indirect taxation. Since ten years ago indirect taxation in Ireland had increased by £1,622,225. It would take a very large reduction on tea and other articles of consumption to bring back the indirect taxation of Ireland to what it was then. There was nearly £2,000,000 of increased indirect taxation placed on the people. Of the whole taxation on the people of Ireland, nearly 75 per cent. was obtained by indirect means. Was it any wonder that his hon. friends should raise the question of over-taxation on tea? Tea! The article which above all others supplied the greatest revenue from taxation. In 1893 the revenue from indirect taxation in Ireland amounted to £5,267,676, and the total taxation was £9,000,000 or a little over. Ten years afterwards indirect taxation had risen to £7,000,000. That was to say, seven-ninths of the taxation of Ireland was got by indirect taxation. When that was considered it could not be said that the demand of his hon. friend was too great. His hon. friend had based his demand upon two grounds. He based it first on the Act of Union, the seventh article of which laid it down that when the Exchequers were united, and there was only one Exchequer, in the future there should be not only abatements but exemptions. That had been recognised by the Committee, and he submitted that when his hon. friend based his demand on the Act of Union he was on firm ground. His other ground was that Ireland had been treated as a separate entity. The late Viscount Goschen used the word in 1890 in this House when making some provision for relief of agricultural rates. Viscount Goschen was asked to extend the provision to Wales, and in reply said he was not prepared to regard Wales as a separate entity. He agreed that Scotland and Ireland were separate entities, and from that day to this Ireland had remained a separate entity. The hon. Member for North Tyrone had mentioned one or two articles with regard to which Ireland had been exempted from taxation. One was the carriage tax, a safe exemption, because the people of Ireland could not afford carriages. Neither was there a tax on armorial bearings in Ireland, and there was a slight distinction in the amount of the tax upon dogs as compared with the tax in this country. In this and other matters Ireland had been recognised as a separate entity. In 1895, when the Agricultural Rates Act was introduced, he recollected what was done. A Commission or Committee had considered the subject, and it was pointed out that prices of agricultural produce in this country had gone down considerably, and the profits of that industry had been diminished by agricultural depression. That was the reason for giving a grant-in-aid. It was just after the late Sir William Harcourt had brought in his new death duties, and a new Government had come into power. Had Sir William Harcourt and his Party remained in power they would no doubt have reduced the tea duty, but a new Party came in and devoted the increase of revenue to the relief of the agricultural rates, and indirectly relieved their own friends the landlords; no less than £1,600,000 was devoted to the relief of rates of this country, and Ireland was exempted from that because it was pointed out by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer that Ireland was a separate entity and outside the exigencies of the finance. Ireland was a separate entity, but no notice was taken of that when money was to be dragged out of her. His hon. friend was on firm ground when he based his demand on the Act of Union, and also when he said Ireland should be treated as a separate entity. She had different land laws, different ecclesiastical laws, and different legal procedure. In all those respects she was treated in a different manner. Why, therefore, should she not have different treatment where taxation was concerned? There was nothing wonderful in the demand that they were now making for a reduction of the tea duty. Why did his hon. and learned friend select it? Because the taxation upon tea struck at the people who could least bear taxation in Ireland. It was a mistake to suppose that the Irish people drank largely either of whiskey or porter or ale. They were the greatest tea drinkers in the world. It was a very curious and strange fact that the poor people in Ireland had the very greatest difficulty in getting milk for the purposes of their food. There was no place where milk was so scarce as in the rural parts of Ireland. If there was an abundance of milk it would be quite possible to do without tea. In large tracts of Ireland there were no milch cows, but there were ranches where store cattle were kept, which cattle were removed to other parts of the country, brought over here to be fattened. It was not, therefore, a false proposition on the part of his hon. and learned friend when he said that tea was the only beverage the poor in Ireland had. Hence, they asked for a reduction of the tax on tea, because a tax on that commodity struck at the poorest people in Ireland, who were least able to bear the burden. His hon. and learned friend had brought before the House, not for the first time, the Act of Union. Since 1800 and again in 1817 things had changed, and changed for the worse so far as Ireland was concerned. In the readjustment of taxation between this country and Ireland taxes were placed upon articles of industry and on the importation of raw materials. Taxes were placed upon hundreds of commodities that were now free. In the course of time by their provincial policy they relieved all those articles and all those commodities of taxation, and he submitted this as an economic proposition that as they relieved industry, and as they took the taxes off those articles one by one, they placed an additional burden upon those who derived no benefit from manufactures at all. As the people in this country were relieved of taxation, the people in Ireland had to bear a greater proportion and they derived no benefit from the relief of taxation on commodities. Not only did they derive no benefit, because they manufactured nothing themselves, but in proportion as one industry or many industries were relieved, a burden was placed upon those who had no industrial occupation at all. He thought that was a sound economic proposition. He submitted that on all grounds his hon. and learned friend had made a good case, that the arguments in support of it were perfectly sound, and that the condition of Ireland demanded a reduction of this particular tax.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said the hon. and learned Gentleman had quoted a remark he had made, and he would like to take up the challenge. The proposition he would like to put to him and to the whole Committee was

that there was absolutely no reason why the man with 10s. a week should pay a higher rate of taxation if he lived in this country than he would pay if he lived in Ireland.

MR. KETTLE said there were fewer people with 10s. a week in Ireland than in any part of Great Britain.

*MR. HAROLD COX said that that might be the case, but a poor man living in a rich neighbourhood was no better able to pay taxes than an equally poor man living in a poor neighbourhood. On the contrary, the argument was the other way. There were so many poor people in Ireland that the general standard of prices was lower, and therefore the 10s. went further than in England. Consequently a poor man in Ireland could afford to pay a higher tax than an equally poor man in England. Yet it was proposed by Members opposite that when a poor Irishman left Ireland and came to England he should pay a higher tax than he had been paying before, even if he earned no more. That was a proposition which hon. Members opposite had never attempted to justify. Instead they fell back on the Report of the Financial Relations Commission. He did not know whether any of them had taken the trouble to read the Report. He had done so when it came out, and very carefully, and he said without the slightest fear of contradiction that there was no authority whatever in that Report for the whole case which Irishmen built up upon it. It was an amalgam of a number of reports by various people. The collective report put forward certain quite anodyne propositions which no one attempted to dispute. It was perfectly true that the taxable capacity of Ireland, treated as an entity, was very much lower than the taxable capacity of other portions of the United Kingdom.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR said they had read the Report, which they knew was concluded with the proposition which the hon. Member had just stated, but it was a false proposition as applied to Ireland.

*MR. HAROLD COX said that that summary of the Report gave five points on which the Commissioners were agreed. He would not read them all. The important one was as follows—

> "That while the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about one-eleventh of that of Great Britain, the relative taxable capacity of Ireland is very much smaller, and is not estimated by any of us as exceeding one-twentieth."

But Ireland, treated as an entity, did not pay one-twentieth or anything like it. If hon. Members examined the Reports issued every year they would find that the contribution of Ireland was less than 2 per cent.

MR. KETTLE: Of what?

*MR. HAROLD COX: Of the Imperial expenditure.

MR. KETTLE: What is the Imperial expenditure?

*MR. HAROLD COX: The expenditure upon common purposes as distinguished from the expenditure upon purely Irish, or purely English, or purely Scotch purposes.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: Will you be good enough to cite the proposition about identity of taxation?

*MR. HAROLD COX: I will read it—

> "That identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burthen."

That is one of the propositions.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: Why did you not read it.

*MR. HAROLD COX: Because it is purely platitudinous, and therefore not worth reading. The whole point was this: Ireland's taxable capacity was admittedly only one-twentieth of the capacity of Great Britain; but Ireland did not pay according to her taxable capacity; she did not pay even half as much as her taxable capacity; she paid less than 2 per cent., whereas, according to her taxable capacity, she ought to pay 5 per cent. If they treated Ireland as a separate entity she underpaid; if they treated her as she ought to be treated, namely, as consisting of a multitude of separate individuals, then none of them were taxed at a higher rate than they would be in Great Britain. There was no purely Irish grievance. It was a poor man's grievance, because taxes upon the necessaries of life pressed on the poor man more than upon the rich man. The grievance which Ireland had was that of the whole of the United Kingdom, and he thought it was to be regretted that Irishmen should dissociate themselves from those who on the Ministerial side of the House wished to defend poor men in all parts of the Kingdom from an unfair burden of taxation.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said they all recognised that tea was a food, because to the poorest people in Ireland and England tea was a food even to a larger extent than it might be deemed to be the food of workpeople. Another important reason should not be lost sight of, namely, that the duty was per pound and not per value. The poor person's tea, costing 8d. a pound before it paid duty, was taxed exactly the same amount as the tea of the wealthy person, costing 2s. 6d. a pound, perhaps, before it paid duty. The tax was altogether out of proportion in respect of the poorest class of the community, because that class consumed much more tea and, therefore, the tax being per pound instead of *ad valorem* it was very much heavier in their case. While sympathising with the appeal made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer he must not be deemed as sympathising with it on either of the grounds that had been given by hon. Members below the gangway. To enumerate all these matters had nothing to do with the merits of the question whether in Ireland there should be a diminution of the tax. The Party opposite had for years taken up a distinctive position, and had claimed that they were going to refuse to put new taxes on foods and to remove those that existed. Now that they were in power why did they not proceed with the greatest possible celerity to justify their promises? Those who were not in the happy position of being Members of that Party had consistently taken up the position for many years past that taxes should be taken off food altogether if possible and put upon manufactured articles. It was because he held those views that he supported this appeal to reduce taxation on food in Ireland, and if there was any shortage in taxation let the Chancellor of the Exchequer put it upon those things that could best bear it—foreign manufactures.

MR. KETTLE said he had hoped the hon. Member for Preston, who had reproduced all the fallacies of the primitive Radical, might have intervened earlier in the debate so that there would be an opportunity of replying to him. He had prophesied that if the hon. Member took part in the discussion he would show himself, not for the first time, brilliantly wrong. He took back the word "brilliantly." He did not dissociate himself from the hon. Member for Blackburn, but proposed to vote with him, and so he should think would all his colleagues. They never heard a word from the hon. Member about the Act of Union or about the rights secured to Ireland by the eighth article.

*MR. HAROLD COX: The bargain made in the Act of Union was undoubtedly a very unfair bargain for Ireland, but it was never enforced, and was revised in 1817 solely in the interests of Ireland. What they were now going upon was the Act of 1817.

MR. KETTLE said he would be glad to know what was the historical ground for the statement that the revision took place solely in the interests of Ireland.

*MR. HAROLD COX: The Report of the Royal Commission.

MR. KETTLE said the hon. Gentleman drew strange conclusions from the Report of the Financial Relations Commission. They took their stand upon the Act of Union, according to which all expenditure was to be treated as common, and, so to speak, Imperial expenditure. The hon. Member had said that Ireland contributed only 2 per cent. of Imperial expenditure. The theory of the Act of Union was that every single penny spent in Ireland on any service was to be treated as the cost of the United Kingdom and the Empire as a whole. While it was true that Ireland paid only 1·92 per cent. to the Army and Navy, her sea-borne commerce was less than 1½ per cent. of the sea-borne commerce of Great Britain, so that she gave more to the Empire in that particular department than she got out of it. Let him read the precise text of the unanimous uncontroverted finding of the Financial Relations Commission. It found that—

> "Great Britain and Ireland must, for the purpose of this inquiry, be considered as separate entities, and that the Act of Union imposed upon Ireland a burden which, as events showed, she was unable to bear"—

and which, he might point out, was heavily increased in 1853 and had not been diminished since. What really happened in 1817 was that the money spent in bribes to secure the overthrow of the Irish Parliament was charged as a separate debt to the finances of Ireland, and was then carried over so as to make the total debt of Ireland in the proportion of 2 to 17 of the total debt of the United Kingdom, and then the Parliament of the United Kingdom said: "Because your debt has increased both absolutely and proportionately since the Act of Union, therefore, you are able to bear a heavier tax than before the Act of Union." The third finding of the Commission was—

> "That the increase of taxation laid upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified by the then existing circumstances."

Fourthly, and this disposed of the entire case of the hon. Member, although he said it was platitude—it was better to found Government on platitudes than on paradoxes—

> "That identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden."

The hon. Gentleman said the poor districts of England and Scotland suffered heavily in relation to their richer neighbours—a proposition with which he entirely agreed—but forgot that these poorer districts were not treated as separate entities in a very solemn statute under which the House was supposed to act, and had not a separate national history running back to a time when the ancestors of certain Members of that

House were wandering about their native wilds. The fifth finding was—

> "That whilst the actual tax revenue of Ireland was about one-eleventh of that of Great Britain, the relative taxable capacity of Ireland is very much smaller, and is not estimated by any of us as exceeding one-twentieth."

Last session he had asked the Secretary to the Treasury what would have been the proportion paid by Ireland in 1905–6 if her tax revenue had been one-twentieth of the tax revenue of Great Britain, and he was told that it would have been £1,800,000 less than was actually paid. On that unanimous finding of the Commission, under this Finance Bill, which he regarded it as a duty of conscience to resist, Ireland was going to pay next year £1,800,000 more than she ought to pay either under the Act of Union or upon the principles of common justice and fair-play.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 307; Noes, 73. (Division List No. 187.)

AYES.

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,RtHon.Herbert.Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Aubrey-Fletcher,Rt.Hn.Sir H.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow,Sir John E.(Somerset)
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs. Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSir J.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Cameron, Robert
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Causton,RtHn.Richard Knight
Cave, George
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil,Lord R.(Marylebone, E.)
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clark, George Smith
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cochrane,Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir.Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinstd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig,Herbert J.(Tynemouth)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(Montgomery Co.
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, SirW.Howell(Bristol,S.
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras, N.
Dixon-Hartland,SirFred.Dixon
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards,Sir Francis (Radnor)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Forster, Henry William
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,RtHn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats,Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch,George Peabody (Bath)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt.Hn.SirWBrampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hardy,Laurence (Kent,Ashf'rd
Harmsworth, Cecil B.(Worc'r)
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hart- Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Helmsley, Viscount
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col.Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert,T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, James Fitzalan(Sheffield
Hope,W.Bateman(Somerset,N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,SirD.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kekewich, Sir George
Kerry, Earl of
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)

Laidlaw, Robert
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lamont, Norman
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever A. Levy(Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood,Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col. A.R.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Middlebrook, William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morpeth, Viscount
Morse, L. L.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nicholson,Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
Oddy, John James
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Percy, Earl
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J(Norfolk,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson, John FrederickPeel
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Roberts, S.(Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Robertson,Sir GScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford,V. H. (Brentford)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, SirC E. (Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorgeD.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest, J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanier, Beville
Stanley, Albert (Staffs,N.W.)
Stanley, Hon.Arthur(Ormskirk
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph (Chesh.)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen,E.)
Thomas, Sir A.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walker, Col.W.H. (Lancashire)
Walton, Joseph
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,RtHn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread Howard
White Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitley, John Henry(Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,Henry J.(York,W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt.Hon.C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.
Ambrose, Robert
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Byles, William Pollard
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Clynes, J. R.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S.
Crean, Eugene
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Glover, Thomas
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hodge, John
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
Mooney, J. J.
Nannetti, Joseph J.
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary,Mid
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Dowd, John

O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Snowden, P.
Starkey, John R.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
Wilkie, Alexander
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

*MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn) moved to reduce the tea duty from 5d. to 3d. He said he would explain why he proposed such a very moderate reduction in the tea duty. The hon. Member for Preston was quite right in surmising that he should support this Amendment on the ground that this particular tax, as well as all forms of indirect taxation, pressed very heavily on the very poor part of the population. He was proposing the Amendment as a step towards the abolition of all forms of indirect taxation. He was opposed to indirect taxation for a great many reasons which were well known. In the first place indirect taxation was opposed to every recognised canon of sound taxation. It was very uncertain in its incidence and it did not tax a man according to his ability to pay, but according to his necessities. The actual reason for taxing articles of any kind was because they were largely consumed by a considerable number of people. If the consumption changed from one article to another, then, of course, the taxes would be transferred to the articles which had newly come into consumption or use. They would find on investigation that all those theoretic injustices which he had mentioned were borne out by actual facts. The amount of indirect taxation imposed during the present financial year through Excise and Customs was £68,000,000, and of this total more than £10,000,000 was raised by taxation upon food. In answer to a question put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer three weeks ago, he was told that in the last financial year the amount of revenue raised by food taxes upon articles such as tea, sugar and cocoa amounted to £13,500,000. Worked out per head of the population that would be equal to an income-tax of 7d. in the £ for at least 2,000,000 of the wage-earning classes of this country. There were in this country more than 2,000,000 families whose incomes were less than £1 a week. Indirect taxation worked out at £6 17s. 6d. per family of five persons, so that with 2,000,000 heads of families, representing a population between 8,000,000 and 10,000,000, indirect taxation laid upon them an annual burden of £6 17s. 6d., and this was levied upon an income of £1 per week, and was equivalent to an income-tax of 2s. 8d. in the £. Confining the calculation to a taxation of articles of food only it worked out in regard to incomes not exceeding £1 a week at 7d. in the £. If they took the higher burden of 2s. 8d. in the £, including all forms of indirect taxation, or if they took the taxation upon absolute necessaries, that was a burden he submitted which was far too oppressive to be borne by the working classes in this country. As a matter of fact a poor man spent as much on taxable articles as a rich man. If they translated into term of income-tax the amount of indirect taxation paid by a well-to-do person in receipt of £2,000 a year, and compared it with the case of a man earning £1 a week, it worked out for the latter at 2s. 8d. in the £, whilst for a man with £2,000 a year unearned income including income-tax it worked out only at 9¾d. in the £. He wished to point out that there was an income which ought not to be taxed at all. He did not think the State had a right to exact taxation from a man when such taxation encroached upon the necessaries of life. They had heard recently a good deal about physical degeneration. Some appalling statistics had been reported to the House in regard to rejections in the Army last year, and physical degeneration was part of a great problem with which they would have to deal. Therefore, it was not a wise policy, it was not social economy, for the State to tax any part of the population if the effect was to prevent them from obtaining what was necessary to maintain themselves in a position of reasonable comfort. So much in regard to the general argument for the relief of the taxation borne by the working classes. As to the particular aspect of the proposed reduction of the tea duty by 2d. in the pound, it would be in the recollection of all the Members of the Committee that two years ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer reduced the tea duty by a 1d. in the pound. At that time he and his friends maintained that the 1d. would not reach the consumer. Twelve months later the Chancellor of the Exchequer altered his mind. He thought that in some respects the then Chancellor of the Exchequer was the most fortunate person who ever occupied that position; the stars in their courses seemed to be working in his favour. Two years ago when he wanted to reduce the tea duty by a 1d. he saw no difficulty in doing it, but twelve months later when he had to meet an appeal for a further reduction he said it was quite impossible to make the concession with the hope that the consumer would benefit. Exactly the same thing happened in connection with the sugar duty. Twelve months ago it was impossible to half the sugar tax, and this year what was impossible twelve months ago was quite possible. There was no doubt that a reduction of 2d. a pound in the tea duty, considering the quantity bought by the working people, would find its way into the pockets of the consumer. There were other reasons which he might mention in support of his proposal, some of which would appeal to all the Members of the Committee, others to special sections of the House. The tax upon tea was the heaviest of all the taxes which were imposed by way of Customs duty. Whereas formerly the tea duty was 25 per cent. of the price of the article, to-day, owing to the fall in price, the tax represented, at all events on the cheaper qualities, something like 120 per cent. on the price of tea. [AN HON. MEMBER: More.] His hon. friend said it was more. That showed that he was within the mark. He could not imagine any other article where the same objection to indirect taxation would apply. The duty on tea was 5d., but the article passed through a considerable number of hands between the foreign producer and the consumer, and in each transaction the trader's profit was put, not on the price of the tea only, but on what had been paid in the way of duty, and therefore he did not think he exaggerated when he said that by the time the article reached the consumer the tax had grown until it amounted to 7d. in the pound. We were almost alone of all the nations of the earth in putting such a tax on a prime necessary of life. That reminded him again of how the late Chancellor of the Exchequer could accommodate his opinions to the necessity of the time being. When he proposed a reduction of the tea duty two years ago he described tea as a prime necessary of life. Twelve months ago, in opposing an Amendment for its further reduction, he said that tea was not a necessary of life, but something in the nature of a luxury. No other English-speaking nation taxed tea at all. He believed that the highest tea tax was in Germany, where it was only 4d. in the pound. He was certain that if any argument would appeal to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Tory benches it was that in relation to the Imperial aspect of this question. About 90 per cent. of the tea imported came from our Indian Empire, and he claimed the support of Unionist Members for his proposal on the ground that it would benefit those who lived under the same flag as ourselves. Turning to hon. Members opposite, he reminded them that they were returned pledged to oppose the taxation of the people's food, but he could not draw any distinction, as far as the consumer was concerned, between a tax upon corn and a tax upon tea. He believed tariff reform was making headway in the country. He was a free trader, although he did not defend free trade by the same arguments as hon. Members opposite. It would be very difficult for them in the country to oppose a tax upon manufactured articles when it was proved by their records that they maintained taxes upon tea, sugar, and other articles of consumption. If they wanted one of the strongest arguments in favour of free trade, let them prove by their action that they were not merely free traders in theory but were determined while they had the opportunity at least to recognise what, as long as he could remember, had been the ideal of the Radical Party, in the matter of taxation, namely, a free breakfast table. He had endeavoured on this occasion to be as mild, moderate, and conciliatory in his language as he possibly could, and he had studiously abstained from saying anything that might wound the delicate feelings and refined susceptibilities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had been as gentle as a sucking dove, and he was as sweet as the songs of the right hon. Gentleman's native land. Therefore he ventured to hope that on this occasion the right hon. Gentleman would pass over his manner and give some attention to his matter. It was very much easier to make remarks on a person's manner than to answer facts and arguments. He would await with interest to hear what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to say on this matter. The right hon. Gentleman might repeat the answer which he had already given, that the Budget had been framed and that it was impossible to make alterations. If that was so, what was the use of Members of Parliament coming there at all? They might as well leave the whole thing to the Executive, and have, instead of human beings, automatic machines or gramophones. He supposed he would not be in order if he suggested sources from which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might recoup himself for what this proposed reduction would involve. He did not think it was necessary to do that. He believed the Chancellor of the Exchequer was as well aware as he himself of the existence of the golden eggs in the hen roosts which he might rob. He was grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the concessions which he had already made in the way of remissions of taxation, but it was not enough to satisfy him and his friends. It was going to be a long time indeed before they reached the abolition of all indirect taxation if they moved at the rate at which they had been moving for the last two or three years. He wanted something more than that, and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would do the best he possibly could under the circumstances to use his ingenuity to find some means of raising the necessary revenue of the country by placing taxation on the classes who by their means were very much better able to bear the burden than those on whom the burden was laid at the present moment.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 22, to leave out the words 'five pence,' and insert the words 'three pence.'"—(*Mr. Snowden.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'five' stand part of the clause."

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said he did not know whether the hon. Member was to be more congratulated on the manner or on the matter of his speech. At all events, he would say that he had been more moved by the manner than the matter, for this reason. The hon. Member, in his opening sentence, had said that his Amendment proposed a moderate reduction of the tea duty. He really thought that the hon. Member could not have had in his mind what the effect of such a reduction would be. The Committee would remember that the surplus revenue of the year, as calculated in the Budget speech of the Prime Minister, was £245,000. At one fell swoop the hon. Gentleman would reduce the whole of that credit balance and turn it into a deficit of over £2,000,000. The hon. Member did not say—and this was of importance—that his proposal was a step towards the complete abolition of all indirect taxation. Surely in regard to this particular matter the speech of the hon. Gentleman was not so clear as it might have been. The balance as between direct and indirect taxation was growing steadily in favour of indirect taxation. If his memory served him right, we were at a period where direct taxation amounted to something like 52 per cent. of the total, and indirect taxation to 48 per cent. This year there had been a very considerable reduction in the amount of indirect taxation by the reduction of the sugar duty. The hon. Member went on to point out that out of a sum of £68,000,000 of Customs and Excise duties, something like £10,000,000 were raised by taxation on food. He had not verified those figures, but for the moment he accepted them as correct. But what about the taxation placed on what were usually called the accumulations of wealth? The income derivable from the death duties and the income-tax totalled in the year from £52,000,000 to £53,000,000—a very heavy and, he thought, not an unreasonable and, perhaps, not a final charge which might be laid upon wealth as distinguished from articles of necessity, such as food. At all events, these figures showed that we laid as much as it was now possible to lay upon the accumulations of wealth, and as little as was relatively possible upon the necessaries of life of the people. He shared with the hon. Gentleman his feelings when he said that £10,000,000 of taxation on food was an oppressive burden, and particularly on the poorer classes of the community; and he ventured to say that there was no one, inside or outside the House, who would not welcome, if financially possible, a realisation of that political programme which was once known as the "free breakfast table." There had been from time to time reductions or relaxations of taxation on articles of food. The hon. Gentleman at the end of his speech was in a mood which made an appeal to every section of the House. He said something to try to catch the Radicals on that side of the House. He appealed to the tariff reformers; and in turn to those Members who acted with him on the benches below the gangway opposite. He tried to show that there was no greater infringement of the doctrines of free trade in taxing corn than in taxing tea. But there was this essential difference between the two commodities, that tea was not and could not be produced in this country while corn could be produced here and he hoped always would be.

Mr. SNOWDEN said that the hon. Gentleman did not grasp his point. What he said was that so far as the pocket of the consumers was concerned, so far as the financial bearing on the consumer was concerned, there was no difference between corn and tea.

Mr. HOBHOUSE thought there was, because the price at which an article grown in this country could be sold was much more affected by an import duty than the price of an article which was not grown here. That was a commercial fact which the hon. Member had not distinguished. The hon. Member for Blackburn went on to say that the cost to the consumer of a tax on tea was a great deal more than the profit that accrued to the Exchequer. That was true; and it was a hint to tariff reformers. But of all duties—and it was a curious fact that the hon. Gentleman had missed his mark in this particular—there was no article, as he was informed, the duty on which brought in such a large percentage to the Exchequer as tea. The hon. Member for Blackburn had also stated that we alone of all countries taxed tea to so large an extent. That was also true; but the hon. Member omitted to tell the Committee that there was no nation which consumed so much tea as this nation. So that the argument could be made quite easily to cut both ways. All he had to say in conclusion was that if this were merely a question of sentiment, if it were not a question of real finance, of pounds, shillings and pence, it would be easy and pleasant to accept the proposal of the hon. Gentleman. Nobody knew better than the hon. Gentleman the difficulty of the financial situation. The Government had inherited an encumbered estate. They had found burdens laid upon the estate of this country which were not entirely of their own making. [Opposition cries of "Oh."] He thought he would draw hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. They had had burdens laid upon the estate of this country which were not entirely of their own making, and in order to redeem and discharge the mortgages laid upon their property, they had had to continue to inflict that taxation which was as repugnant to them as it could be to anybody else.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) said that the hon. Gentleman had concluded his speech with a statement which had caused him some surprise, because he did not, at first, understand what his allusion was. The hon. Gentleman had said that he and his colleagues inherited from their predecessors an encumbered estate. He was amazed that colleagues in one Government should have so freely criticised the acts of their immediate predecessors. They now learnt that the hon. Gentleman meant to say that he and his colleagues had inherited a burden from the Opposition. What they inherited from the Opposition was not a burden but a surplus. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh."] Yes, a surplus of something like £3,000,000, which had gone to make that reduction of Debt for which Gentlemen opposite had so clamorously taken credit. Of course, it was true that every Government and every Chancellor of the Exchequer had to pay interest on debt incurred by their predecessors and by past generations. The National Debt remained, and he did not understand that it was part of the proposals of the present Government to abolish it. On the contrary, they said that the sacrifices they had made in that regard had already exhausted their zeal for the reduction of the debt of the country, and that next year they were going to propose to the House to release the country from the sacrifices they had been making in recent years, in order to spend the money in some other way. Accordingly, the reference of the hon. Member to the financial liabilities of the country had no force whatever. He did not suppose that the Government meant to cease to reduce the Debt altogether. They had come to a point at which they might reduce the fixed charge for the reduction of Debt by lowering the Sinking Fund and resuming control of the money devoted in recent years for that purpose. He would pass from the *obiter dictum* of the hon. Gentleman which he thought the hon. Member would regret on further consideration, and turn to the speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn. He must join the Secretary to the Treasury in complimenting the hon. Member for Blackburn on the manner of his speech. If the hon. Member would permit him to say so, he thought that when he adopted that tone of sweet reasonableness, he was not less but much more convincing than in his more vitriolic mood, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had described it, in which he so often discussed financial arrangements. The hon. Member had asked a statement from him as to the course he meant to take. He had often expressed his desire to see a reduction of the tea duty, at least a reduction of a preferential kind on all tea imported from other portions of His Majesty's Dominions. He would be glad to see that carried out now, and to see this heavy duty, in proportion to the value of the article, still further reduced. It is one of the duties which by reduction, he believed, might be made largely more remunerative, because there was no article that he knew of, the consumption of which responded more quickly to reduction of the duty than that of tea. So that by a considerable and striking reduction of the duty on tea they would find in a very short time they would lose much less than the due proportion of revenue. For what was lost per lb. would be made up largely by the increased number of lbs. consumed in the country. That being so, he had considerable sympathy with a Motion for the reduction of the duty. But he had no sympathy at all with the main ground upon which the hon. Gentleman proposed the reduction. The hon. Gentleman proposed it avowedly as a step towards the abolition of all forms of indirect taxation. What he proposed to substitute for indirect taxation he had not disclosed on that occasion. The hon. Member for Preston had uttered similar views. He also was opposed to all forms of indirect taxation; but then he associated with that the enunciation of another tax which the hon. Member for Blackburn did not propose. The hon. Member for Preston proposed that no man should pay indirect taxation, but that every man should pay direct taxation—in fact an income-tax, now confined to those whose incomes were above a certain sum, on a graduated scale beginning at a rate however small. The proposal of the hon. Member for Blackburn was the very antithesis of the proposal of the hon. Member for Preston. It was that the poor should be exempt from taxation—what limit of income should constitute a poor man for the purpose the hon. Gentleman did not say—and that the necessary balance of revenue to meet the expenditure of the country should be secured by increasing the burdens of the rich. To exclude from taxation the great mass of the people of a country whose policy they controlled was not a safe or honest basis upon which any State could be built. It might be justified in some oligarchy or autocracy where the great mass of the people had no share in the Government; but no sensible man, or indeed, honest politician, who weighed what he said, would commit himself to the doctrine that the great bulk of those who controlled the policy of the country should make no contribution to the cost of its administration. He was antagonistic, therefore, to the main principle of the hon. Gentleman. More than that, he differed from him as to the incidence of taxation as a whole. The hon. Member had complained that indirect taxes pressed unduly upon the poor. Of course, if the Government depended upon nothing but a single tax on tea or a single tax on corn, as the scale of taxation rose so it would press unjustly upon the poor. But the taxation of the country must be considered as a whole, and, therefore, while much of what the hon. Member said would be true if the tax on tea was the only tax, it became untrue when the tea tax was considered in relation to the rest of the fiscal system. It was, no doubt, true that if they had but a small number of indirect taxes, and if they adopted the principle, which this country had adopted for many years, that indirect taxation should be placed—excluding alcohol—on articles of general consumption, none of which were produced here, these indirect taxes would press invidiously upon the poor as compared with the rich. For that there were two remedies. One was to adjust that inequality by the proper use of direct taxation; and the other was to extend the principle of indirect taxation so as to tax not merely the necessities of the poor, but the luxuries of the well-to-do.

Mr. SOARES: What luxuries would the right hon. Member tax?

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he would tell the hon. Gentleman what taxes he would impose if ever he was Chancellor of the Exchequer again. The idea of the hon. Member asking him, sitting on the Opposition side of the House, what taxes he would propose to impose whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not yet told the House how he proposed to meet the liabilities which the Government had undertaken, was simply preposterous.

Mr. SOARES: The right hon. Gentleman said he desired to tax the luxuries of the rich. All those who supported the Government would like to do so wherever it was possible. He therefore asked the right hon. Gentleman what luxuries he would propose to tax.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that if the hon. Gentleman was unable to see the number of luxuries that went untaxed which might be taxed he had a greater poverty of imagination than might be suspected. The hon. Member for Blackburn had contended that the poor man expended as much on these taxed articles of necessity as the rich. That he did not believe. The expenditure in a rich man's establishment on sugar or tea or any other articles of that kind which were taxed was much higher than that of the poor man. The hon. Member for Blackburn did not put it that the poor man paid as much, having regard to the proportion which his expenditure bore to income. He made the definite statement that the poor man took as much of these articles as the rich man. That he did not think was true. The hon. Member was also satirical and suggested that the Prime Minister changed his economic doctrines on these points to suit the exigencies of the moment—that, to use his own words, the right hon. Gentleman always found his conclusions pointing in the direction in which he wished to go. The hon. Member had appealed to tariff reformers for sympathy for his Motion on the ground that 90 per cent. of the present supply of tea came from British Possessions beyond the sea. He would be much more inclined to vote with the hon. Gentleman had he confined his proposed reduction to that 90 per cent. of the supply. He shared the hon. Gentleman's desire to bring the British Possessions into closer connection with this country, but he had not quite the same reason for reducing the tax on the remaining 10 per cent. of supply. The hon. Member appealed to them as tariff reformers, but he had not embodied any proposals as to tariff reform in his Amendment. He appealed to hon. Members supporting the Government on the ground that there was no essential difference between a tax on tea and a tax on corn. He was glad to have that admission from the hon. Gentleman. What a pity it was that the Prime Minister did not hold the same opinion, and what a pity it was that the hon. Member was not present to remind the Prime Minister of that when the right hon. Gentleman was so eloquent on the iniquity of a tax on corn. The distinction which was attempted to be drawn between corn and other articles of general consumption was one of the flimsiest of the many preposterous propositions which had been laid down in the course of recent financial debates. One thing which had astonished him and which he thought had astonished some hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench was the argument put forward by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury that the price of an article grown in this country was more affected by a tax than the price of an article which came from abroad and which could not be produced here. He wished the hon. Member had developed that argument. When the whole supply received was taxed it was clear that the whole burden of the tax must be borne by the consumers, together with such additions as were made for outlay and other considerations. But that was not so when a great portion of the supply received was untaxed. The effect of any duty on the price of an article depended upon the proportion which the untaxed supply of the article bore to the whole consumption, and as the proportion of the untaxed supply was large and the taxed supply small, so would the effect of the duty be lightened. But where the whole supply was taxed as in the case of tea, the whole duty was borne by the consumer.

MR. HOBHOUSE dissented.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN observed that the Financial Secretary did not agree with him, but he defied the hon. Gentleman to make good the proposition which he had laid down a few moments ago or to find a single economist to support it. He thought the hon. Member for Blackburn might have found a more powerful ground for his appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Many of them had given promises that they would vote for the reduction of the tea duty. So long as the Unionist Party was in power and the Anti-tea Duty League approached them they were naturally anxious to win any votes they could and gave these promises recklessly and proudly. Now was the time for the redemption of these promises. Or was it one more added to the many expectations held out at the general election and disappointed in the course of the present Parliament? One more promise made only to be broken? He did not intend to vote for the Amendment of the hon. Member. He differed from the grounds on which the hon. Gentleman had proceeded; he differed in opinion from him on the subject of taxation. The hon. Gentleman had attempted to win their support by a reference to preference, but he put no preference into his Amendment. Under these circumstances, he would not be surprised if he was not inclined to follow him into the lobby, and he did not suppose the hon. Gentleman would regret it. There was a reason of more general application which prevented his supporting the Amendment. The hon. Gentleman had remarked that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would probably say that the Budget was already framed, and that it was impossible now to make any alteration; and he had replied to that by saying: "If that be so, what is the use of the House of Commons?" In recent proceedings, a good many of them had been inclined to ask that question. But after all, the finances of the matter must be looked at as a whole. He did not think this Budget was a good one; he thought it was a bad one. It was saddled with a liability for which it made no provision; it created a situation which he believed no Chancellor of the Exchequer had ever voluntarily, or with his eyes open, created before. They were light-heartedly imposing upon future years a burden variously estimated at anything from £6,000,000 to £10,000,000 for old-age pensions alone, without regard to the expenditure on the Navy of the sums that would be required for that service, or on the Education Bill, or on any other purpose; and they were doing that without the remotest idea in the minds of the House as to how that vast expenditure was to be met. But that was not all. The Government had chosen this moment actually to reduce the resources which they already possessed. He did not think that there was ever a case of such reckless, such short-sighted finance, and he would be astonished, should the Government remain in power, if they themselves were not the first to regret the reckless use they were making of their opportunities now. Hon. Gentlemen opposite smiled as if he were drawing an exaggerated picture. But what was the Chancellor of the Exchequer's description of himself and the estimation in which they stood? He described himself as a robber, not a potential but an intentional robber, looking about to see whose hen roosts he could open most easily, and where he could steal eggs with the least fear of punishment. He confessed that he regretted to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer use language of that kind to describe his position and his policy, and he regretted it the more because he was afraid that it exactly corresponded to the truth. But to pass from the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the position of the finances of the country as a whole, what did they find? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "A stunning deficit, a falling revenue, and a depressed trade."

That was as strong language as any he had himself used. The right hon. Gentleman repeated it, and spoke of other countries being in the same financial distress. He went on—

> "I do not know that this consoles the man at the head of the Treasury who has a great deficit to work off."

A great deficit to work off? The Financial Secretary had spoken of a surplus of £245,000. How much of that was left after the legislative prospects of the Government?

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he was speaking of the Budget of this year and of the expenditure for this year, and there remained the surplus to which he had referred.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that the Financial Secretary must go back to the Treasury and get up his facts. There was a surplus of £245,000, but if he looked to old-age pensions, for which they had one quarter in this financial year, and to the extra expenditure on other matters, sanctioned by the Government, he would find that there was no longer £245,000. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not speaking of this year; he was looking ahead a little. The great deficit which he had to "work off" was not a deficit which he had inherited from his Unionist predecessor, but a deficit which he had inherited from his predecessor, the Prime Minister, and which he had to work off next year. He said that depression did not console—

> "Men, who have a great deficit to work off; men who have probably in front of them a diminishing revenue, everything falling, estate duties, Customs, Excise, everything diminishing, except the demands on the Treasury."

That was the position which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had described, not in that House, but to the bankers and merchants with whom he dined in the City of London. It was a position which nobody could view without anxiety, if not alarm. He could not take the responsibility for himself—he did not profess to speak for his friends who had held the same high office in recent years—and under the circumstances he could not vote for a reduction of the taxes which the Chancellor of the Exchequer still proposed to keep on, unless he had an opportunity of presenting an alternative scheme as a whole. He had to take this Budget as a whole or leave it as a whole. He thought it bad, and that it was framed on wrong lines, but it was not possible for him by means of suggestions in Committee or by any Amendments that a private Member could move, to transform this Budget into such a scheme as he thought would place the finances of the country on a sound foundation. Under these circumstances he would take no part in the division on the reduction of this tax. He would take no responsibility; he must leave the responsibility to the Government for the scheme they had proposed. When the time came to express their opinion on the Budget as a whole, when they came to the Third Reading, he would give his vote against the Bill as being unsound from beginning to end, as not to be recast, and as a measure which must be condemned as a whole because it could not be amended in any particular.

*MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) said he merely rose to call attention to the right hon. Gentleman's remark that the only alternative to this tea duty was a tax upon luxuries. The right hon. Gentleman was Chancellor of the Exchequer himself only two or three years ago. He presumed that the right hon. Gentleman was then looking out for what objects he could tax, and if he knew of objects of luxury why had he not told them. The fact of the matter was, that, like all other tariff reformers, the right hon. Gentleman always took refuge in vague generalities.

THE CHAIRMAN: I really do not see how this bears on the Question before the Committee.

*MR. SOARES: I agree that it does not, but I wished to deal with the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman and that was the only reason for my rising.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said the Financial Secretary had rather complained that they had not specified the source from which the deficit was to be met if the Amendment was carried. But the hon. Gentleman overlooked the fact that there was an income-tax clause in the Bill which still remained to be discussed, and any deficit that might accrue could be met when they reached that point. In regard to direct taxation, hon. Members on those Benches, if they were called upon to choose between it and indirect taxation upon the poor, would infinitely prefer direct taxes. It was of first importance that people should understand that they were paying taxes, and the money should not be extracted from them by subtle means which they did not comprehend. With direct taxes there would probably be more effective control over the way in which they were spent. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer did not intend to support the Amendment, and the reasons he had given came rather as a surprise. The Labour Party were usually accused of being hard to satisfy, and if anything was taken by them it was said that they took it with a bad grace, and they were lectured for demanding all or nothing. Now, the reason given by the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer for not supporting the Amendment was that it only proposed to give him 90 per cent. of what he desired to see accomplished. Of the total amount of tea imported 90 per cent. came from countries under the British flag, and only 10 per cent. from foreign countries, but because the 10 per cent. was to be included, therefore the Resolution was to be rejected. Another point which should not be allowed to pass without challenge, was the statement that the rich man paid more in the matter of indirect taxes upon food than the workman. He disputed that statement entirely. The expenditure of the rich man upon his household, his servants, his establishment, was undoubtedly greater than that of the workman in his home, but the amount spent on the servants was part of their wages. Suppose the servants supplied their own food in every case as they did in some cases, there would be no question then of the establishment paying a bigger amount. When food was reckoned as part of the wages the fact that the master of the establishment had to pay the tax upon it was taken into account.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Does the hon. Member suggest that wages go up and down as the duty on tea is raised or lowered?

*MR. KEIR HARDIE said that what fixed wages was the cost of living, and that if the cost of living was high, wages would be correspondingly high. Supposing servants were required to purchase their own food and the cost of food was raised 50 per cent., would they be paid the same wages as before? Certainly not. Therefore, the cost of living regulated the wages paid to servants, though not solely or exclusively, and when the owner of an establishment was paying his indirect tax upon tea, he was paying for himself and his servants, the amount paid for his servants came from their wages, and therefore, the statement that the house of the rich paid no more than the house of the poor was correct. But there was another point of view. Tea was more commonly consumed in the houses of the poor than he understood it to be in the houses of the rich. At dinner, tea, supper, and breakfast, tea, coffee or cocoa was the common dish amongst the poor. Among other classes of society wine and the higher priced liquors were the more common form of beverage. The dining-room of the House of Commons would prove it if there was any dispute about the point. The tax paid upon wine was by comparison with tea, an infinitesimal proportion of the price of the article. The tax upon tea was over 100 per cent. of its value. The tax upon champagne was 20 per cent. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that no sensible politician would seek to exempt the poorer part of the electorate from the payment of taxes. If that were so some very great men of the past could not be regarded as sensible. The only one he would name was the late John Stuart Mill who laid it down as an axiom that taxation should not come from the necessities of life of the poor, but from the surplus income of the well-to-do, and the proposition on the face of it was sound. If the taxation of the country was taken out of the incomes of the very poor they were still further reducing the very low standard of living which already obtained. If it was imperative that it should be so taken, then they would have to grin and bear it as best they could. But when it was known and was not disputed that there was a surplus income in the nation from which the taxes could be taken without inflicting hardships on a single living individual, it was little short of a crime to put these taxes on the underpaid poor. If it was said that to relieve them of taxes while leaving them political responsibility and power was an anomaly which could not be recognised, his reply was that the remedy lay in the hands of that House. Let legislation be so ordered as to ensure for every worker the means of earning a competency and prevent enormous incomes accumulating which had been extracted out of the misery and suffering of the poor, and then apply the canons of taxation in the way the right hon. Gentleman had suggested. But so long as the law of the land permitted these people to be robbed until they were in a condition of poverty in which they were unable to find the necessaries of life, apart from taxation, every canon of righteousness and of equity demanded that that House should not impose burdens upon those who were already victims of a most unjust and iniquitous system. He hoped and trusted the Committee would show its opinion of this matter by voting for the Amendment. They had no desire to see the basis of taxation broadened in the way that appealed to hon. Members above the gangway. They were seeking to relieve the poor of the burdens of taxation already put upon them. They believed rightly or wrongly that what was covered by the phrase "broadening the basis of taxation" was to relieve the well-to-do of their share of taxes in order to put them on the poor, and because they believed that they would resist to the utmost any attempt to broaden the basis of taxation on the lines suggested by tariff reformers. But the position of free traders would be strengthened if the Government, having the opportunity and the means at its hand, had broadened the basis of taxation by relieving the overburdened backs of the poor and placing the burden on the underweighted backs of those so well able to bear it. Let the Government accept this Amendment, and they would be able to go to the country on it as an alternative to the cry of broadening the basis of taxation, especially if they found the money for the deficit by a graduated tax upon incomes exceeding £10,000 a year. A small fraction would be sufficient to meet the £2,000,000 deficit which the Amendment would create. He hoped the Government not only in the interests of the submerged poor but in the interests of the principles of free trade would agree to the Amendment, and thereby prove that they were free traders not merely in regard to the great articles of commerce but also in regard to the food of the labouring poor.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said he could not support the Amendment, and if he gave his reasons he could also add that he could not associate himself with the arguments of the hon. Member for Blackburn and the Leader of the Labour

Party, who seemed to desire to place all taxes on one class. If these were democratic sentiments he began to think there must be something in the arguments of those who held that the time spent at school in learning Greek was totally wasted. If he understood the meaning of the word it meant something absolutely contrary to that which the two hon. Gentlemen had read into it, and implied the negation of all class legislation. He had made no pledge, or if he had it was to endeavour to get the tea duty reduced, and that he would endeavour to do, but only by what he thought effectual measures to that end. There might be other hon. Members who wished to bring about the same end who might not be able to vote for this Amendment. The fact was that the present high rate of duty should by all possible means be reduced, but it did not follow on that account that one was to vote for this Amendment, nor did it seem to be compatible with anything like elementary consistency for hon. Gentlemen who bombarded the Government with claims for social reforms costing more and more and more to come forward now and to seek to take away from them some of the means which they had to pay for such reforms and to pay their way. The hon. Gentleman who moved this reduction spoke very mildly and moderately, but he thought he could remember that quite lately he had said he would never be so mean spirited as to thank the Government for the Old-Age Pensions Bill. It was a miserable instalment which he despised. But if they wanted more and more social reforms how could the hon. Member opposite reasonably ask the Government to relinquish ways and means by reducing the tea tax. Hon. Members opposite on the Labour Benches were all calling out for those benefits, but it seemed to him that those who pressed for all those reforms should have the consistency to leave the Government something with which to pay the bill. He had, however, some clients himself whose case had not been brought before the House, and who had been described by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean as "a white oligarchy"—he referred to the planters who produced most of the tea. There was no class more worthy of the sympathy and attention of the House. Planters worked hard in foreign countries where they invested British capital and employed British Indian labour, and they were hard-hit by this very high tea duty, which he wished to see reduced, on account of both the producer and the consumer. Some £40,000,000 of British capital were invested in this industry in which some 2,000,000 British subjects were employed. Those planters were the makers of some of the Indian provinces, and were the true friends of the natives. Little had been done for them by the Government, and their loyalty was taken for granted and not considered worthy of much purchase. None the less they deserved the sympathy of the House, and their case, as well as that of the consumer, was deserving of attention when this Amendment was before the House. The coal industry only used to pay a tax of 10 per cent., but it came forward and got relieved of it. Sugar used to pay 28 per cent., but those interested set to work until it was reduced to 14 per cent. But that was a very powerful industry. Tea remained at 65 per cent. and that was a great deal too high. The tea industry paid £6,000,000 of duty every year. whilst the alternative temperance drinks brought into the revenue about £500,000, consequently tea stood easily first. He confessed that he did not quite follow the arguments of the Prime Minister when he put sugar so much before tea in respect of claims for reduction, because the tea duty was practically a food tax. It was almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of tea to the poor people, or the boon that would result from a reduction of the tea duty. No less than 93 per cent. of the tea produced in the world was British, whilst 94 per cent. of the sugar produced was foreign. Not long ago he asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the amount of the respective war taxation paid upon tea and sugar, and he replied that tea paid £14,000,000 while sugar paid £41,000,000, but if the ordinary tea duty was added it would be found that tea since the war paid £51,000,000 against £41,000,000 paid by sugar. In other countries they did not find that tea was taxed to such an extent as in this country, where they taxed the product of British capital and industry much more than any other continental country. It was true that, but for the set-back which had occurred in this country by a reduction in the consumption, tea would have had a very successful year, but that was because of the boom in cheap tea and while the producer benefited the consumer suffered. In Russia the consumption had largely increased, and they were reducing their duty, and that was an example which he sincerely hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would shortly see his way to imitate. He did not think it was necessary to trouble the Committee with figures or statistics showing how great the burden of taxation was, because that aspect of the case had already been dealt with. He gathered that a poor man could not get a drinkable tea under 1s. 2d. a pound, and that was a great deal too much. He thought the Anti-Tea Duty League and other associations would do well to keep up their agitation in order that the Government might be brought to recognise that tea had quite as much claim upon them as sugar. He was sorry to introduce this jarring note between tea and sugar, because they were two substances which often appeared in an intimate and friendly conjunction in the cup and elsewhere. It was, however, necessary to press the case of tea as compared with sugar because the latter always seemed to get the better of the argument, not on account of the intrinsic merits of the case, but because of the far greater influence with which the sugar case was pushed. Lord St. Aldwyn said that the sugar tax was not only a war tax but a tax necessary to produce a revenue for the general purposes of this country, and tea had a much better claim for reduction than sugar. He was prepared to admit that this had been a prosperous tea year for the trade. He might add that he had personally no interest whatever in the tea trade. But although there had been a prosperous year in tea it had all been in consequence of the high price of low-class tea. The consequence was that the poor people got a poorer quality of tea to drink. The sellers of low quality tea had been doing so well that there had not been that outcry against the duty which would otherwise have occurred, and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not take it from that fact that everything was all right with the tea trade. On the contrary the public had suffered. He was afraid that the planters might be tempted by high quotations to pluck chiefly grades of bad tea which would be to the detriment of the people of this country. The trade of London, too, was affected, and dealers were disposed to prefer Calcutta under existing circumstances. There was another result of this high duty and it was the largely increased consumption of China tea. He was not one of those who spoke ill of everything Chinese, and he had no sympathy whatever with the perpetual denunciation of this nation, to which he was condemned to listen, but having seen the manufacture of tea both in India and China he had no hesitation in saying that it was much better for the people that they should drink cleanly-manufactured Indian tea than the dirty low-class China tea. He did not say that of China tea generally, but the low class of China tea was very dirty. He meant no disparagement whatever of China tea, but only of a certain class of stuff. The tea importers brought into this country a very low class of cheap China tea for blending purposes, and they were obliged to do this to enable them to sell at 1s. or 1s. 2d. a pound. He thought the best thing for Parliament to do was to endeavour to get these taxes reduced gradually, and not press session after session for every kind of expensive reform which made a reduction of the tea duties absolutely impossible. To show his own appreciation of the real position, he would vote against the Amendment, acceptance of which had been rendered impossible, as everyone must recognise, by vast commitments, to which both sides of the House with their eyes open had consented.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said the hon. Member who spoke just now told the House when referring to the tea tax in 1905 that he had long been anxious for a free breakfast table, and that the tax on tea was not defensible because it affected the rich infinitely less than the poor. He remembered seeing posters forty years ago calling on the electors to support Liberal candidates who were in favour of a free breakfast table. It was a long time coming. It was now generally admitted that tea was just as necessary as bread itself. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury had stated that the effect of taking 2d. off the tea duty would be to take more than £2,000,000 out of the Exchequer. Most of that money was coming out of the pockets of poor people. This was supposed to be a free trade country, and yet the import duties paid on tea, tobacco, and other commodities used by the working classes amounted to over £20,000,000 a year. The import taxation per head of the population amounted to 15s. 3d., while in Germany, which was supposed to be a protected country, it was 9s. 5d. He could not understand how hon. Gentlemen opposite could pretend that this was free trade. It was not free trade at all. The Secretary to the Treasury preferred to tax tea instead of wheat because the one could not be grown in this country and the other could. One was produced by British labour in this country, and therefore a tax must not be put on the imported article, but a tax might be put on tea because it did not help in any way the labouring people of this country. The poor paid two or three times as much of the tea duty as the rich. If a rich man spent 6s. for two pounds of tea at 3s. per pound, he only paid two fivepences per pound for duty; but if a poor man spent 6s. for six pounds of tea at 1s. per pound, he paid six fivepences for duty. That was supposed to be for the benefit of the working classes of this country. That system of taxation was supported by Liberal and Labour Members. There was an enormous amount of manufactured goods coming into this country which the poor never bought.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is really getting very wide of the subject.

MR. HUNT said he was sorry he had got over the line altogether. He was only going to refer to sugared articles incidentally. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated at Manchester that what the people had to pay for sugar they would get back in the shape of old-age pensions. The tea was going to be just in the same position—only more so, because the tax was very much heavier. If the money was to be got out of the working classes for old-age pensions in that way, he would remind the Committee that a great many of them were not going to get any benefit at all. He wondered how hon. Gentlemen could insist on this heavy taxation of tea and still call themselves free traders. Would someone on the other side get up and state where free trade came in?

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow) said that after listening to the clear, logical, and explicit speech of the hon. Member for the Ludlow division of Shropshire the Committee would have no difficulty in making up its mind on the question at issue. The hon. Member for Blackburn had no desire to conceal the fact that this Amendment embodied a fundamental principle, namely, the principle of direct taxation. He and his friends were in favour of direct taxation, and they were also in favour of shifting the burden of taxation from the shoulders of industry to the shoulders of the moneyed. He had the good fortune to be in the United States of America in 1900. During that year the South African War was raging, and the Americans also had a war all to themselves, called the Philippine War. He was astonished on his arrival in the United States to find that in buying certain commodities he had one cent or two cents extra to pay over and above the normal price, as a war tax. He persuaded those people that he was paying a war tax in his own country, but irrespective of that they made him pay the war tax of the United States on the commodities he purchased. The Americans knew how much it was costing. The American workman was able to estimate the direct cost of the Philippine War, and the result so far as he could see, during the three months it was at its height, was that there were no Mafeking nights in the United States. There was calmness, and a lack of enthusiasm in regard to the prosecution of the war. In his judgment, if the principle of direct taxation was introduced in a similar way in this country, we should have a great many less wars and a good many less Imperialists in that House than were to be found on the occasions when War Estimates were up for discussion. The Secretary for the Treasury had twitted his hon. friend with not laying down any specific method whereby the money could be raised. He had also told the Committee that the present Government was suffering because of a legacy left them in the shape of liabilities by the late Government. They were all well aware of the liabilities which were handed over to the present Government owing to the extravagance of the late Government, but why impose a tax on the poorest classes of the community to make up for that extravagance ? The workers were practically ground between two millstones. The people who were in receipt of under £1 a week and who had the average family responsibilities were the economic slaves of the employers and they were the economic and agricultural slaves of the landed proprietors. If they contributed the labour part and only received one-third in wages in return as the result of their labour power, in his judgment the people who took the other two-thirds ought to bear the taxation in order that it might be removed from their shoulders. He submitted that the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench required to be very careful in regard to the methods of maintaining taxes on tea and sugar. There was a possibility that it might be used against them by hon. Gentlemen like the Member who had just sat down when the next election came round. They, on the Labour Benches, stood for free trade, although they did not speak under the shadow of Richard Cobden and John Bright, both of whom were anti-trade unionists and rigid individualists. There was one living relic of that school in the House—possibly there were others, but they concealed their opinions more judiciously—and that was the hon. Member for Preston. The Labour Members did not take up the attitude which individualistic free traders took up ; but they did say that to tax commodities because they came across the ocean or across a frontier was a fictitious tax which the consumer had to pay. Consequently, they took up the position of propounding international reciprocity without attempting to build around the British nation, or the British Empire, barriers which gave no advantage or privilege to the worker, but afforded capitalists and monopolists an opportunity of rigging the market and charging the highest prices to the consumer. The fact was that if this tax were taken off there were other sources of revenue to which not only the Treasury Bench, but most of their supporters, were practically committed. What about the taxation of land values ? That had been discussed in the House repeatedly and the hon. Members who now formed the Government voted for it.

*THE CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Member could not discuss all other sources of taxation.

MR. CURRAN said he bowed to the Chairman's ruling, but had only been pointing out that there were other sources of taxation which might be tapped if the reduction of the tea duty was made. In conclusion, he maintained that if the Government were prepared to carry out certain financial reforms to which they were committed, the tea tax would be reduced, and double, aye, quadruple the amount would be made up from other courses of revenue.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE appealed to the Committee to bring the discussion to a conclusion, as it was absolutely necessary to go on to other Amendments on the Paper. They had already debated longer and more fully the tea clause of the Finance Bill than was usual.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230 ; Noes, 91. (Division List No. 188.)

AYES.

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beck, A. Cecil
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Branch, James

Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C. H(Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Sir W. Howell(Bristol, S.
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt, Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, Rt Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E.(Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M.(Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Leese, Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. M.(Falkirk B'ghs
McCallum, John M.
McCrae, Sir George
McLaren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
McMicking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas William
Nuttall, Harry
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J.(Norfolk, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson, Sir G. Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W. Dudley (S'thampton)
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.
Ashley, W. W.
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barnes, G. N.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burke, E. Haviland-
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalrymple, Viscount
Devlin, Joseph
Donelan, Captain A.
Flynn, James Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Hazleton, Richard
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
Markha, Arthur Basil
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Grady, J.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Renton, Leslie
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Snowden, P.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John K.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Steadman, W. C.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winterton, Earl

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Charles Duncan.

*MR. FELL moved to add to Clause 1: "Except in the case of tea produced in any country forming part of the British Empire, in which case no duty shall be charged." This was, he said, an Amendment which he had moved last year on the Finance Bill, and he would not have moved it this year if circumstances had not changed, and, if he might say so, if they had not had another Chancellor of the Exchequer. He thought he would be able to show that both these points had a material influence on the action which might be taken in regard to this question. Last year when he moved his Amendment the Prime Minister was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that right hon. Gentleman to some extent had pooh-poohed the question of Chinese tea competing with Indian tea in the market. He could not then but acquiesce in the contention of the Prime Minister, for the figures were in his favour. Having regard to the fact that there was now a new Chancellor of the Exchequer and that a material change had taken place in the situation in relation to China and Indian and Ceylon teas he thought he was justified in moving this Resolution. He regretted that the only way of discussing the question at that stage was by moving a reduction. He now moved that there should be a reduction of 1d. on the duty on tea produced in the British Possessions and Dependencies, which would mean, if agreed to, a loss of £1,162,000 to the Exchequer, for they could make the estimate from last year's imports. But he would have much preferred that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should recommit this Bill so that an extra 1d. could be put on China tea which would give the right hon. Gentleman £150,000 further this year. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman would not object to that, because they had ample evidence that the margin of the Budget was very slender, even if it had not gone the other way. That could be arranged by recommitting the Bill and providing that duty on all tea should be 6d. and that 1d. should be taken off that which was produced in British Possessions and Dependencies beyond the seas. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer last year, in regard to this matter, stated that the latest figures he had showed that the imports from China were only 5,600,000 lbs., whilst from India and Ceylon they were nearly 300,000,000 lbs., so that the import of China tea might be regarded as a negligible quantity and the competition from China was not worth consideration. The imports of China tea were now, however, increasing, and the favoured position of Indian tea might be wholly lost by a wave of popular opinion in favour of China tea. He was not beside the mark in saying that the consumption of China tea was increasing and might grow until China tea would be a very great competitor of that grown in our own Dependencies, as the following figures would show. The figures of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer of 5,600,000 lbs. was the import of China tea for 1905. In 1906 it had grown to 13,500,000 lbs., and in 1907 to 19,000,000 lbs. That it had grown to four times as much in two years pointed a warning to us, and was a very strong argument in favour of this Motion, which sought to give some benefit to Indian and Ceylon tea over that grown in China, Java, and other foreign countries, of the growth of which we had no knowledge, and over which we could have no control, and which we could not test, except in the docks when it arrived. This question not only affected India and Ceylon, but also other British possessions. Natal was now growing tea. In 1906 the export from Natal was 899 lbs., last year it was 576,000 lbs.—a remarkable increase. The value of the first exportation was £38, last year it was £17,000. Next year it might be doubled. At all events it was becoming an important factor in the economy of the Colony of Natal, which we ought to be glad to support. He understood also that tea was to be grown in Uganda, and the Shire highlands, which might in the future form sources of our supply. The reduction would be of immense advantage to them and to the Empire. This was an important question, because both in the Colonies and abroad these teas were becoming better known. In Russia, where at one time China held the field, the consumption of Indian tea was on the increase, as indeed was the case all over the Continent. It was one of the great factors of the world's economy, and India and Ceylon were supplying tea to all parts of the world. He desired by this Amendment to assure the growers of India and Ceylon and our other possessions beyond the seas that the greatest market in the world should be secured to them, and that they should, when they sent their teas here, have some assured benefit over the foreigner—some preference over China teas. Thereby they would be enabled to withstand any fickle change that might take place in the popular taste. There was another side of the question, another way of looking at it. It was a question of preference extended to our own Colonies and Dependencies which would give them some benefit. Although that argument did not meet with any great response last year, except from the Opposition Benches, that night it had met with a response from the hon. Member for Blackburn, who had pointed out in supporting the reduction he moved that those teas came from our Colonies and Dependencies. On that ground he claimed the support of the Opposition, and the support of the hon. Member for Blackburn and his friends. The ground on which support was claimed for this proposal was that we would rather consume teas which came from our Colonies and Dependencies than teas from China, especially when we considered what the countries were from which they came. When we considered the wonderful markets we had for our goods in India and Ceylon and the advantages they gave us in those markets, we should do well if, by reducing this duty in the way he proposed, we conserved the British tea markets for them. He had received many letters from India during the last year thanking him for what he had done. The planters in India might well look for some recognition of the way in which they supported this country. He did not say they did not make money out of tea, but he did not think that they made much on the whole, for they had their ups and downs like most others, and he believed that nothing had had more ups and downs than the tea markets of India. The way these planters supported us during the late war merited some recognition from us, and we could not show it in any way better than by giving them this slight preference. He had shown how it could be done by the Chancellor of the Exchequer without any draft on the Budget. Without going into any question of tariff reform or anything of that kind, he put it that this was an occasion on which they might give this slight benefit to India and Ceylon; it was really a slight one which he hoped that the Committee would admit. Circumstances had changed since he brought the matter forward last year, and the arguments which the Chancellor of the Exchequer then used had not proved sound in the light of events. The right hon. Gentleman thought that China tea was not going to have an increased sale in England, but in that he had proved entirely wrong, and he hoped that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would look at the matter afresh, and see whether he could give a favourable answer in some way to these people, who were looking to their parent for some recognition of them as devoted and attached children, and he trusted that the opportunity would not be lost.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 22, at the end, to add the words 'except in the case of tea produced in any country forming part of the British Empire, in which case the duty shall be charged at the rate of 4d. per pound.'"—(*Mr. Fell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not propose to go into the question of colonial preference and those other matters because his reason for refusing the Amendment had no relation to his view upon that particular question. The financial reasons he found amply sufficient without assigning others. He was not sure if he were to speak on its merits that the case put forward by the hon. Gentleman was a strong one. The hon. Gentleman had said that there was a very large increase in the consumption of China tea, and had referred to the fact that there was an increase of 5,000,000 lbs. as compared with last year. But if he would look at the consumption of China tea during the last seven or eight years he would find that there was very little difference indeed. In 1900 it was 21,000,000 lbs., it then went down to 17,000,000 lbs., then it went up again to 27,000,000 lbs., then down to 17,000,000 lbs., 21,000,000 lbs., up again to 27,000,000 lbs., then down it dropped to 15,000,000 lbs., and this last year it was over 18,000,000 lbs.

Mr. FELL: It was 19,000,000 lbs.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said it was 18,776,000 lbs., in round figures 19,000,000 lbs. But it had been fluctuating around that figure for the last seven or eight years, while the consumption of Indian and Ceylon tea had run up to something like 280,000,000 lbs. The superiority was so immense that he did not think that a preference would make very much difference. The consumption of China tea was very largely a question of taste, and it would be indulged in without any regard to the extra penny or twopence. There had been a very considerable extension of our trade with China during the last few years; from 1885 to 1907 it had considerably more than doubled, and he did not think that this was a time at all to accept the proposition to put a special tax against the foreigner in favour of our Colonies. He did not think that he ought to do that with China, and if he had any such intention China was the very last country on which he would begin to operate. But he would rather not go into that question. The hon. Gentleman had given his reasons as cogently and as forcibly as possible, but he on his side had reasons amply sufficient of another kind for refusing the Amendment, and he would rather dwell upon them than enter the wider field of controversy to which the hon. Gentleman would like to lead him.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that after the speech which he had made earlier in the afternoon the Committee would know that he was not able to support his hon. friend on that occasion, though he would not on that account be thought unfaithful to the cause of preference. If they took the proposition which his hon. friend had brought forward, and considered the arguments in its favour, he was not sure that there was not a good deal to be said for it, if indeed the arguments in its favour were not overwhelming. They had to look at the situation as a whole and at the Budget as a whole. He could himself conceive a much better Budget. He wished it were in his power to offer a complete scheme in lieu of that for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible. But he could not propose an alternative Budget under the circumstances, and he was bound to adhere to the resolution to which he had come to leave the responsibility alike of the imposition of taxation and the remission of taxation to the Government, and to take no share of it upon himself. He only desired to say one or two words in reference to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said on the question of foreign competition, as to the danger to the Indian and Ceylon trade, and as to the question of preferential duties being of no advantage to our Colonies. As regarded the first question, the importation of China tea was not to be measured wholly by the amount which was sent to this country. No doubt, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, a considerable quantity was imported by people who preferred the plain quality of China tea to that of India and Ceylon, and to whom it was probably rather an article of luxury. Such people would not be deterred from having that which suited their taste by the imposition of a slightly higher duty. To that extent China tea was a luxury. There were, however, importations of China tea of a very low quality indeed, and though they were perhaps small in amount, certainly very small in proportion to the total consumption of tea, he thought that they would injuriously affect the price of Indian and Ceylon teas, and so bring down the consumption of those teas. He, therefore, thought that some differential treatment might be more effective than the right hon. Gentleman supposed. He might add that he himself was disposed to anticipate, though of course he spoke with no skilled knowledge, keener competition in future, not so much from China as from Java, which produced a tea very akin to the Ceylon tea, which was much more likely to be a rival to it in the public taste. The other observation which he wished to make was that even if the result of preference to Indian and Ceylon tea was not to diminish the proportion of foreign tea sold in this country, it might still be a great stimulus to the Indian and Ceylon trade. As he had said earlier, no article operated upon by the Chancellor of the Exchequer more quickly responded to the lowering of the duty than tea; and if they were able to make, not a large, but a sensible reduction in the duty on Indian and Ceylon teas he thought they would find a rapid increase in the consumption of those teas, even though the consumption of China tea remained stationary. That was to say, the total consumption of the country would be larger in respect of Indian and Ceylon tea, but the amount of China tea consumed would remain about the same, and, therefore, its proportion to the whole would be less. These were the general observations which he wished to make on the Amendment which his hon. friend had moved. He would like to support preference for our Indian and Ceylon fellow subjects in this matter, and he would like to establish a general system of preference; but he did not think that they could conveniently press the matter piecemeal at present, and he must leave to the Government the responsibility of their scheme.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had answered his hon. friend by saying that as he could not find the money he could not accept this Amendment. Surely that was a confession of very considerable mismanagement of the national finances. Take the question of the Army. More money had been spent on the Army since the present Government had come into office——

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

MR. ASHLEY: Am I not entitled to prove that this Amendment would be justified?

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member's observations are going too wide of the Amendment.

MR. ASHLEY: Am I not entitled to show that money could be found by economies in other branches of the services?

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has to deal with the Amendment, which is the expediency of giving preferential treatment to the Colonies in the matter of tea. The sources, or the economies which might be effected, whence money could be found to meet the deficiency of revenue, are outside of the Amendment.

MR. ASHLEY said he would pass to the Amendment, which he supported on two grounds: the first being that of Colonial preference. He was sure that in theory most members of the Committee were in favour of giving our own people across the seas some preference over foreigners, and especially, he thought, we should give a perference to our people in India and Ceylon who had had very bad times in the tea trade. He would wish the Committee to consider whether Natal did not deserve some sympathy. The tea industry there was in its infancy, but had shown most remarkable progress in the last two years. A preference would undoubtedly stimulate it. He was informed that Natal tea was nearly as good as Indian tea and of very much the same quality, and would therefore appeal to a large class in this country. Tea-growing was also being taken up in the Shire Highlands and in Uganda, both of which Colonies had been started in the last ten or twenty years by a large expenditure of English capital in the building of railways and opening up the country, and by sending out some of our very best men to administer it. Surely it was unwise to spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar. A preference would be a very great boon to them. He was not convinced last year that the reduction of 1d. would be sufficient to make a substantial reduction in the price of tea, and therefore on that ground he supported the Amendment that it should be 2d. instead of 1d.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham) pointed out that the trade of India and Ceylon had been built up without a preference of any sort. The whole of our imports of tea thirty years ago came from China. To-day nine-tenths came from India and Ceylon, so that it could not be reasonably suggested that they needed assistance. We imported a small quantity of tea from Japan, which was on the point of revising her tariff. Supposing that now we discriminated against Japan in a way which did no real harm, but a thoroughly good theoretical injury, was it not quite certain that in the revised tariff in 1911 we should find British manufactures treated in a worse way than they otherwise would have been? In regard to China, she had never asked to send us tea or to trade with us at all. We went to war with China, and by force of arms backed up by diplomacy we had insisted on China opening her markets to our goods, and it would be a very wrong and immoral action on our part to put any impediment in the way of her sending her goods to us. Our Consul at Hankow wrote in this year's Report that there was a growing feeling of antagonism to foreign traders and that the injustice of protected countries restricting Chinese customs duties to a bare 5 per cent. *ad valorem* was constantly harped upon in the native newspapers. He believed they would find, if they adopted the policy suggested by the Amendment, a steady opposition to the exportation of British goods into China, which was a market that we had done a great deal to cultivate, which was certainly growing and had responded very well to the efforts which had been made in that direction. India was a very great market for our Manchester goods, but China was the next best market, and it certainly seemed a pity in the efforts to cultivate the best market to strike a great blow at the second best. Holland was a country which almost more than any other country had treated us well. It was a free-trade country and we had been given access into Dutch markets. The Dutch East Indies had thriven rapidly, and given us favourable opportunities. If we acted in a way hostile to goods of Dutch origin we should be putting ourselves in a very foolish position, because we should be starting a tariff war with a nation with whom we had every wish to remain on good terms, and who had treated us always in trade matters extremely well. Holland, after all, had a very peculiar position in Europe and

Germany would be only too pleased to incorporate Holland in her dominions.

***THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN:** The hon. Member cannot go into these questions. They are far outside the question whether preference should be given to tea imported from the Colonies.

MR. HOLT said that, if we drove Dutch products to find their market in Germany, he could not but help fearing that the consequences might be disastrous in other directions than those of trade. This was a most beautiful illustration of the truth that the doctrine of retaliation was utterly incompatible with the doctrine of Colonial preference. Here was the first suggestion made to establish Colonial preference, and it was aimed at three of our best friends and customers which had treated us as well as any three nations in the world. He hoped the Committee would not listen to the proposal.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 34; Noes, 251. (Division List No. 189.)

AYES.

Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Coates, Major E. F.(Lewisham)
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch,Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Guinness, Walter Edward
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
M'Arthur, Charles
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Stanier, Beville
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Fell and Mr. Ashley.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett,C.H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,Sir W.Howell(Bristol,S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.Sir W.Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Hobhouse, Charles E. H
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning

Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N)
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Sir G Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford))
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt. Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

MR. KETTLE said the Amendment he proposed to move gave preferential treatment to Ireland in regard to the sugar duty. He did not want to weary the Committee by a repetition of the case made out on constitutional grounds with regard to the tea duty. He was aware that Ireland shared in the benefits from the reduction in the sugar duty, but he did not think the entire case which had been made from the Irish benches had been met by the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The sugar tax in Ireland produced in 1904 £602,000, and it produced the same amount in the following year. The year before the War it produced £688,000. He thought it would be agreed that every argument which applied to tea would apply with greater force to sugar. Practically speaking, the people of Ireland were buying and using proportionately the same amount of sugar as the people in this country, but they had to pay the tax out of incomes which were about one-third the average income of the rural population of Great Britain. That meant that the people of Ireland were much more heavily hit than the people of Great Britain. The object of the Union was stated to be that if Ireland was associated with England the Irish people would have the advantage of living on the credit of a rich neighbour, and that Irish resources would be developed in a way which would not be possible if Ireland relied upon her own resources. If the terms of the Act of Union had been respected in the Finance Bills of the House, the effect would have been that the entire party above the gangway would be the most ardent and fanatical Home Rulers, because they would have discovered long ago that the government of Ireland was not paying a dividend. With the operation of the old-age pension scheme in Ireland and the comparatively small reduction in the sugar tax; with the decline in other branches in the revenue in Ireland; with the financing of land purchase and the endowment of a University; with the other sundry grants which must be made to sundry other objects; with the impossibility of raising a single fresh tax or making any old tax more fruitful, this country would shortly be confronted with a state of affairs in which the taxation would be much larger than could be got out of the country even by bleeding it white. He supposed that the response of the Government would be the same as was stated in regard to the tea duty Amendment, and consequently he would feel it his duty again to register his objection in the division lobby. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 1, after the word 'allowance,' to insert the words 'in the case of Great Britain.'"—(*Mr. Kettle.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. HOBHOUSE said the hon. Member had recognised that all the arguments which he advanced in support of his Amendment on the sugar duty had precisely the same weight and tendency as those which he advanced at an earlier stage of their proceedings. If he did not repeat the arguments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was not because he wished any personal discourtesy, but simply because he did not wish to take up the time of the House. While the financial effect of the hon. Member's previous proposal would be very great, the effect of this would also be very serious, because it would abolish revenue to the extent of £300,000.

MR. HAZLETON said the Committee would understand that if he did not go over the same arguments and the same objections in regard to the decision of the Government in this matter, it was not because those arguments did not apply with equal force. The same arguments and the same objections from an Irish point of view remained with regard to the decision which had just been announced as existed in the earlier case put that evening. The Secretary to the Treasury had stated that this Amendment would mean a loss of £300,000 a year of revenue from Ireland. That was exactly the merit which they saw in the Amendment, and there would be no point at all in proposing it unless it meant a reduction of the taxation derived by this country from Ireland. In his opinion they would never see a reform in the government or in the expenditure of Ireland until Irish expenditure became greater than its income. It was with the view of reducing taxation in Ireland that he supported the Amendment. He hoped it would receive sympathetic treatment.

MR. KETTLE said there were some facts which he hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would carry in his mind. He and his friends had noticed that since the present Government had been in power there had been a steady attempt on the part of the representatives of the Treasury to depart from the findings of the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland, which the Liberal Party accepted when in Opposition. Such relief as would be afforded by the reduction of the sugar duty would be entirely automatic, and that reduction was not granted with a view to give Ireland any advantage. While the protests which Irish Members had made had been without avail, he could assure the Government that people in Ireland were asking what was the difference between Tory finance and Liberal finance, and were coming to the conclusion that when the Tories were in power they expected to be robbed; it seemed in the nature of things; and when the Liberals were in power they had not that expectation, but nevertheless they had that experience.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 55; Noes, 235. (Division List No. 190.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Barnes, G. N.
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Burke, E. Haviland-
Clynes, J. R.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Crean, Eugene
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Flynn, James Christopher
Glover, Thomas
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kelley, George D.
Kilbride, Denis
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N)
Mooney, J. J.
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Shackleton, David James
Snowden, P.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wilkie, Alexander

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Mr. Kettle.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashley, W. W.
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Branch, James
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cave, George
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clough, William
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt Hn L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Helme, Norval Watson
Helmsley, Viscount
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Hills, J. W.
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Houston, Robert Paterson
Idris, T. H. W.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred

Mr. Kettle.

Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,SirD.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Leese,SirJosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon.David
Lockwood,RtHnLt.-Col. A.R.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald,J.M.(FalkirkB'ghs)
Maclean, Donald
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Middlemore,JohnThrogmorton
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price,SirRobertJ.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea,Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rendall, Athelstan
Renton, Leslie
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts,SirJohn H.(Denbighs.)
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanier, Beville
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Thomasson, Franklin
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Wason,John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley,John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn SirThomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson,J.W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

*MR. HAROLD COX moved to insert after the word "eight" the words "until the first day of July, 1909, when all duties upon sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharine, upon the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland shall cease." He would merely explain that the object of this Amendment was to make the sugar tax like the tea duty, an annual instead of a perpetual tax. He was quite sure that that would be approved of by all Liberals. The consequence of it would be that the House would every year have an opportunity of reviewing the tax. His Amendment would have no effect on the Budget, it was purely a matter of Parliamentary convenience; and he thought that the House of Commons should have every year an opportunity of reviewing every tax. He would remind the Committee that when the sugar tax was discussed in 1901, the whole of the Liberal Party was in favour of making it an annual tax. He would be in order in reading some of the names of the gentlemen who supported that proposition:—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Burns——

MR. HOBHOUSE: Is this in order?

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: It is not in order to read the names. The constituencies of the hon. Members may be mentioned.

*MR. HAROLD COX: I am reading the names from *Hansard.*

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: You cannot mention the names in the House. You may refer to hon. Members by their office or constituencies.

*Mr. HAROLD COX said he was afraid he did not remember the constituencies of all the hon. Members he wished to refer to; but they included the Secretary of State for War, the President of the Local Government Board, the Postmaster-General, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary for Scotland, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, the Solicitor-General, and the Secretary to the Treasury himself. All these and many other hon. Members were in favour of the very Motion he was now moving, and the Liberal Whips told for it. It seemed to him that under these circumstances the Government must accept this Amendment, and therefore he would not use any arguments in favour of it.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 4, after the word 'eight,' to insert the words 'until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and nine, when all duties upon sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin, upon the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland, shall cease.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he was greatly obliged to the hon. Gentleman for including his name in the list which he had read out; but he thought the hon. Gentleman would see that the argument in favour of his proposal must be resisted on quite different grounds from those he had stated. [Cries of "Why."] The hon. Member had said there was no money in his proposal. That was quite true, it did not affect this year's Budget. But what the hon. Gentleman wanted to do was to get the Government to disclose what was to happen next year. [Cries of "No."] If the Amendment were agreed to, that after 1st July, 1909, all duties on sugar should cease, it was quite clear that it must carry with it a suggestion of what was to happen to the duty on sugar next year.

Mr. HAROLD COX: Let me remind my hon. friend that these are exactly the words we have just passed with regard to the tea tax.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said that he would remind the hon. Gentleman that that must disclose to some extent the intentions of the Government as to what would happen in the case of the sugar tax next year. But it was not his real objection to the Amendment; he based his objection to the proposal on the ground that if it were carried, the importers of sugar would hold up the whole of their imports immediately until 1st July, 1909, on the off chance of the sugar duty not being re-imposed after that date. There would not be merely a great interference with the sugar market—and sugar, as one of the Members for Ireland had stated, was one of the staple foods of the people of this country—but the result would be a great dearth, an absolute famine of sugar. The hon. Gentleman proposed to initiate a sugar famine, to enhance enormously the price of sugar, and indirectly to impose a tax which directly he wished the Government to remove.

Mr. STUART (Sunderland) said that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury seemed to have entirely misunderstood the real meaning, bearing, and significance of the Amendment. It was to put the House in the position that the sugar duty would have, like the tea duty, to be imposed each year. If the clause was not changed by the adoption of the Amendment, and if the Government did not choose to meddle with the sugar duty next year, then it would not be in the power of the House to discuss the question except on a side issue. The Amendment no more said that the sugar duty would not be re-imposed next year than the previous clause said that the tea duty should not be. The wording was somewhat different undoubtedly from the wording of the tea duty clause; but it would be seen that that was necessary because it had to repeal a certain existing law, or part of the law. He would be very glad indeed if anyone could suggest any other means by which they could change the sugar duty from being a permanent duty to one to be imposed each succeeding year. He had supported the right hon. Gentleman's Budget on many points. He felt the propriety of supporting the Government Budget proposals on their vital points, because the Government were doing so well as they were doing; but he sincerely hoped that they would not oppose an

Amendment which was fair and which would not entangle the Government in their financial proposals in the least.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) thought the Committee generally must have shared the surprise of the hon. Member for Sunderland at the really extraordinary character of the reply given by the Secretary to the Treasury. That hon. Gentleman, so far as he understood him, had given two reasons why he could not accept the Amendment. It appeared to him that those reasons had nothing in the world to do with the Amendment. First of all, the hon. Gentleman said that if the Committee adopted this Amendment it would disclose to the whole world the intentions of the Government in regard to the sugar duty next year; but the hon. Gentleman had not told the Committee how they would be disclosed. All that the Amendment did was to make the sugar duty temporary instead of permanent—that it should last only until 1st July 1909, at which date Parliament might have an opportunity which it would not otherwise have of reconsidering the matter. Then the hon. Gentleman said that the Amendment would affect the imports of sugar. He did not see how the hon. Gentleman could seriously suggest that either of these consequences could follow.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Most seriously.

MR. BOWLES hoped that someone on the Treasury Bench would explain how if this duty only remained in force until 1st July, 1909, it would have any effect whatever on the action of sugar importers. He thought the hon. Member for Preston had rendered a real service in making the suggestion he had done. As the Committee were aware, an enormous proportion of the whole tax revenues of the country was raised automatically every year without any necessity of the intervention or knowledge of the House of Commons. They heard a great deal about Parliamentary control, but there was something like 70 per cent. of the tax revenues raised year by year which no Parliament in our time had sanctioned. That was done under permanent enactment. In the interests of the House he really desired to see that practice done away with. The proposal of the hon. Member for Preston involved no diminution in the amount of money provided for by the Government. It would merely enact that on 1st July, 1909, the House would have necessarily the opportunity of considering the sugar duty again, instead of relegating it to the reconsideration of the Government of the day. He maintained that the Amendment was entirely reasonable, and, in his humble opinion, the Government would be very well advised to accept it.

*MR. GRETTON (Rutland) said that there were very serious difficulties in raising discussions on this tax as now imposed on account of the forms of procedure in the House. The Secretary to the Treasury had said that the adoption of the Amendment would produce a sugar famine; but he thought that was perfectly absurd. The well known position which the Government would be in in the next financial year would make it far more probable that the importers of sugar would rather rush to get rid of their stocks than to hold them up. He supported the Amendment because he believed that every tax imposed on the people of the country ought to be under the full control of Parliament.

SIR EDWIN CORNWALL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) thought the Amendment would have exactly the effect his hon. friend had stated. If hon. Members looked at the words of the Amendment they would see that that was so—

"When all duties . . . shall cease."

If those words were put into an Act of Parliament, he did not think the Government would possess so free a hand as now.

SIR F. BANBURY wished to support the Government, but not on the grounds stated by the hon. Member for Sunderland or the Financial Secretary. The hon. Member for Sunderland agreed with the Amendment, but was going to vote against it because the Government had done so well. In his own opinion, the Government could not have done worse, and he proposed to vote for the Government because they had done so badly. The Financial Secretary opposed the Amendment on the worst ground that had ever been advanced in the House, either from the Treasury or any other Bench. He admitted it would not interfere in any way with the Budget but advanced the startling proposition that importers of sugar would hold back their stocks for a year in order to see what the Government were going to do next year.

MR. HOBHOUSE denied saying anything so ridiculous. What he said was the sugar would be held back until there was a sugar famine.

SIR F. BANBURY asked why should people hold back sugar for any time because something was going to happen next year. Why did not the tea dealers hold back tea? The Amendment put sugar in exactly the same position as tea. That was to say the Government in 1909 could review the sugar duty without falling into any of the pit-falls the hon. Gentleman had alluded to. The hon. Gentleman's argument originally did not touch the point, and his statement just now took away any force it previously had. He supported the Government because he wished to be consistent. He believed he was one of those who in 1901 voted for making this tax permanent, and having heard no reason from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury which led him to alter his opinion he should support the Government in this good work.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central) said the Liberal Party had for many years past been advocating a free breakfast table, and therefore he much regretted that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury should have intimated so early in the debate that the Government would not accept this Amendment. The hon. Member for the City of London had been consistent, and having voted for making this tax permanent now supported the Government; but he would like to see the Financial Secretary to the Treasury consistent too; as in 1901 the hon. Gentleman voted for its being made a temporary tax. It would have been so simple to have put on record that they looked upon this tax as of a merely temporary character.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) expressed the conviction that they all, including the Treasury Bench, desired that the sugar tax should be only temporary, but when the hon. Member for Preston moved an Amendment and the hon. Members opposite congratulated him on having done a public service, and the hon. Member for London supported the Government, he was inclined to be suspicious. What his hon. friend the Member for Preston desired to do was to tie the hands of the Government so that next year they should not have a free choice in regard to the tax. The Government desired to make this a temporary tax, and to abolish it as soon as possible, but they wished to have a free hand in the matter. Having regard to the old-age pensions scheme it was thought better to leave the tax on this year, though next year they hoped it would be off. If his hon. friend could not trust the Government he could.

MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) proposed to amend the Amendment by leaving out all the words after "1909." He thought there was a good deal in the argument of the Financial Secretary that it would cause delay if this tax was going to be taken off finally and completely. If these words were left out it would ensure that the House would have the opportunity of considering the matter on its merits next year. Unless the first part of the Amendment were accepted it would be impossible to consider the matter next year. Most of them on the Opposition side were anxious to see the sugar duty abolished altogether. But that could not be done under the present system of taxation.

MR. HAROLD COX said he only put the words in to make his meaning clear, and if the Deputy-Chairman would tell him if the Amendment was clear without them, he would accept the Amendment of the hon. Member.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said he could not make any statement on the merits of the Amendment. He could only say it was quite in order to amend the

Amendment by leaving out the words proposed to be left out. The hon. Member must satisfy himself of the effect of the proposed Amendment to his Amendment.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'nine,'"—(*Mr. Guinness.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment."

MR. STUART said he was very much afraid the effect of the Amendment would be that if no action were taken next year, the tax would go on as before. He did not think that that was what the Committee for a moment desired. He did not wish to prejudge the question at all; he simply wanted to see the tax made an annual tax instead of a permanent one. It seemed to him that the justification of the argument of the Secretary to the Treasury was that he really believed the Amendment would tie the hands of the Government absolutely and require them to undertake to abolish the tax next year. That was not the case at all, and he felt there was some misunderstanding on his part. It might be well if they asked some more experienced Member of the Government to consider between now and the Report stage, how the tax could be simply made an annual one. There was a feeling on the part of some Members of the Committee that the words proposed by the hon. Member for Preston would in some way tie the hands of the Government. If that were so, surely some Amendment could be made to carry out the views of the hon. Member without tying the hands of the Government. The matter might be held over till the Report stage when the Government might bring in some phraseology to make the tax an annual one without tying their hands. He did not believe the Amendment to the Amendment would make matters any better.

SIR F. BANBURY said he desired to point out that the Amendment would have the effect desired. It would make the clause read: "The duties, drawbacks, and allowance in respect of sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin set out in the schedule to this Act shall, as from the 18th day of May, 1908, until the first day of July, 1909, when all duties upon sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin, upon the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland, shall cease, etc." Everything, therefore, was included and would come under review on 1st July, 1909.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that by the acceptance of the Amendment to the Amendment they would place themselves in the very undesirable position of re-establishing the duty as it existed at the present time. He was quite certain that none of his hon. friends desired that, but it would be the inevitable result of the acceptance of the Amendment to the Amendment.

MR. HAROLD COX suggested that, instead of the proposal of the hon. Member opposite, they should add at the end of his Amendment the words "unless Parliament otherwise determines." That would make it clear that it was the wish of the House to leave it open till next year.

MR. GUINNESS asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Another Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"At the end, to add the words 'unless Parliament otherwise determine.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question, "That those words be there added to the proposed Amendment."

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD thought that if the Government would accept these words it would get them out of the difficulty. He had consistently supported the idea that the tax should be temporary and that it should be possible for the House of Commons year after year to go into the question as to whether it should be continued or not. The tax was made a permanent one in 1901, and there was no doubt that that was a very objectionable thing to do. It was a tax upon food, and it was imposed for the specific purpose of the war. There were no grounds which at that time justified its being made a permanent tax. He was not a Member of the House at the time, but he remembered reading how for a whole night the members of the present Government, unanimously supported by the then Opposition, protested against the tax being made a permanent one and thus taken from the yearly review of Parliament. It was now fairly agreed that the Amendment in its altered form would make it clear that the tax was temporary and was one which the Government of the day could put into the Finance Bill and continue, but which the House of Commons would have a right to consider and discuss. That was all they asked; why could not the Government agree? The Secretary to the Treasury had told them that if they made the tax capable of being yearly reviewed, they would bring about a very objectionable state of things in the market; but it would, at any rate, be no worse than the state of things which existed in the tea market. If it was desirable that the tea duty should be annually reviewed, why should not the sugar duty be treated exactly in the same manner? It had been made clear that the Amendment simply intended to put the sugar duty on the same footing as the tea duty. He hoped the Government would admit that taxes on food were not things which should be permanent, and that they would accept the Amendment.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said the Secretary to the Treasury had surely seen by this time that the solitary argument which he had advanced against the proposal of the hon. Member for Preston had scarcely that force which they expected arguments from the Treasury Bench to have. He honestly confessed that until the hon. Member moved the addition of the words "unless Parliament otherwise determine" he could not have voted for the Amendment; but surely, now those words were to be added, the principle so dear to the hearts of hon. Gentlemen opposite, that Parliament should have the opportunity of reviewing the taxes yearly, must come home to them. Where could be the danger of an annual revision of the sugar duty the same as the tea duty? The Secretary to the Treasury must by this time have seen the absolute fallacy of the single argument he had advanced against a proposition which really embodied one of the doctrines of the Liberal Party, and which must find acceptance by Liberal Members, who wished that Parliament, the mirror of the nation, should have controlling power over taxes of all description. He could not see that an annual review of the sugar duty could be any more detriment to the Government than the yearly review of the tea duty.

Question put, and agreed to.

Question proposed, "That the words as amended be there inserted."

MR. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne) said he wished to support the Amendment. He gathered that members of the Government had pledged themselves repeatedly with regard to the sugar tax, and that they had made stronger pronouncements against that tax than against the tea tax. They now argued that Parliament must not be trusted to debate the sugar tax. That was a position which they could not altogether defend. The House would never deny to the Government its support if a tax on sugar was essential, and surely the Government ought not to say that they could not trust Parliament to discuss it every time the Budget came up, and that therefore they must depart from the strong views they held in 1901. It had been suggested that this could be altered on Report, but it was not likely that they would have a Report stage. He appealed to the representative of the Government whether he could not meet the strong desire expressed by many of their supporters that this should be made an annual and not a permanent tax.

MR. HOBHOUSE said he could understand that if there was in practice any difficulty in discussing the question of the continuance or the abolition of the sugar tax it would be very undesirable and most unconstitutional to restrict the power of the House of Commons to debate it. But was there in practice any difficulty in doing this? They had always discussed the continuance or abolition of every tax imposed by the Finance Bill, and there was very nearly no restriction at all on the freedom of debate. The hon. Member for Preston had rather taunted certain members of the Government with having voted for the tax, in its original inception, being an annual tax and now continuing it as a permanent tax. If there was any inconsistency in that position he was quite willing to admit it, but there was a difference in saying when a tax was imposed for the first time, that it was much better that it should be an annual tax, and when they found it a permanent tax continuing it as such while the House had liberty to discuss it as it had done each year since the present Government had been in office. He therefore could not accept the Amendment even as amended.

MR. HAROLD COX pointed out that there was a very great difference between a clause appearing in the Bill year after year and the necessity of moving a new clause. He raised the question last year, and had very great difficulty in raising it because he had to wait till the Report stage to move a new clause. The opportunity did not arise in Committee. If the clause was in the Bill they could automatically deal with it in Committee and it had to come before the House. This was not such a light matter as the hon. Member seemed to think. The whole Liberal Party was in the position of saying they were opposed to the sugar tax when asked for as a war tax. Now they were asked to keep it on as a permanent tax. Every Member who voted with the Government was voting for making the sugar tax permanent, and he wondered how they would reconcile that with what they had said to the country.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton), as one who had voted with the Government when the matter was raised before, said he should like to have some better explanation of what was the difference between sugar and tea. Why should sugar be treated differently from tea? Why should one be temporary and the other permanent? He would like to have some explanation; otherwise, he must vote against the Government, and he did not want to do so.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 111; Noes, 213. (Division List No. 191.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hon. Sir H.
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barnes, G. N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burke, E. Haviland-
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cleland, J. W.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cooper, G. J.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Doughty, Sir George
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, C (Barrow-in-Furness)
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Flynn, James Christopher
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Harwood, George
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Idris, T. H. W.
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kelley, George D.
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Killop, W.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mooney, J. J.

Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinburgh, Central)
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Renton, Leslie
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Shackleton, David James
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Snowden, P.
Stanier, Beville
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Walker, Col. W.H. (Lancashire)
Walsh, Stephen
Watt, Henry A.
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Harold Cox and Mr. Scott.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooks, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm'gham)
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C.H. (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S.
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, W.E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J.M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johsnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean Donald
M'Callum John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallett, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, Sir John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)

Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt. Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. McKinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Mr. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale) moved to amend the clause so as to provide for the grant of a rebate on foreign-refined sugar stocks held on 18th May, the day on which the Budget Resolution came into force. He was understood to say that on that day the considerable stocks in possession of importers were depreciated to the extent of the reduction of duty, and they had thereby suffered serious pecuniary loss. That sugar had been bought in the ordinary course of trade. [Interruption.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

Mr. McARTHUR, continuing, said those stocks had depreciated to the extent of the reduction of the duty. The Committee would quite understand how that came about. [More interruption.]

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said his hon. friend was raising a most important matter touching the interests of a large trading community, and it was impossible, owing to the state of disorder prevailing in the House, for the hon. Member to make himself heard.

Mr. McARTHUR, resuming, said it was a great injustice to those men to have to suffer such a great pecuniary loss, more especially because it was a loss which they did everything in their power to avoid. They wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointing out this very danger. They told the right hon. Gentleman that they had heard a report that he was going to reduce the sugar duty, and they asked him if that was his intention to remember their stocks, pointing out that if he did not allow them a rebate they would be great sufferers. The right hon. Gentleman made a guarded reply to those representations, in which he said that their interests should have careful attention, and upon that assurance they had relied. They might have been protected from loss in two ways: either the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have given them sufficient time to dispose of their stocks, or he might have allowed them a rebate. As a matter of fact, he only gave them eleven days to dispose of their stocks, and as two of those days were Sundays the period allowed was practically reduced to nine days, which was quite an insufficient time. If the right hon. Gentleman could afford to take off part of the sugar duty, surely he could afford this small amount. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had all along under-estimated the amount required for the purpose of rebate; he had put it down at £11,000, the members of the trade themselves had made careful inquiry and they found that it amounted to no less than £38,399. What happened in connection with the Finance Act of 1903 was a parallel case. At that time the late Lord Ritchie, then Mr. Ritchie, proposed to abolish the duty on corn, and to make a reduction on glucose, and he made provision that all those who had stocks on hand should have a rebate equal to the difference in the duty. He could not understand why that precedent should not be followed on the present occasion. In 1903 there was no party against it; on the contrary, the Party opposite supported it and tried to widen it. Why the Government had adopted a different course now it was difficult to understand. He entirely acquitted the Chancellor of the Exchequer personally of any want of consideration, for he would be the last man to be wanting in consideration, but he could only suppose that the right hon. Gentleman was driven by circumstances over which he had no control to take the course he had taken. He hoped that even at the last moment he would reconsider the matter. If the right hon. Gentleman could not undertake to do so, he must appeal to the Committee to consider the case of the people for whom he pleaded. They were not wealthy people, and he did not suppose that they commanded many votes, but he did not see why they should suffer to the extent of £2,000 or £3,000 each through no fault of their own, and simply because the Exchequer had failed to make arrangements which would have obviated this loss. He asked that they should be placed in such a position that this remission of taxation should not be the means of throwing a loss on innocent persons. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 7, at end, to insert the words 'and the reduction shall be deemed to have taken effect as respects the duty which has been paid by any person on any sugar molasses, glucose, or saccharin which was in his stock or possession at the close of the eighteenth of May, nineteen hundred and eight, provided that the excess duty paid thereon by such person amount in the aggregate to a sum not less than twenty-five pounds.'"—(*Mr. McArthur.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not complain that the hon. Member had raised the question, but he thought he was entitled to point out that they had already had several debates on this identical point on the Budget. The hon. Member, representing, as he did, a considerable number of gentlemen in Liverpool who were interested, no doubt, thought that he was bound to make a final protest, and he merely mentioned the matter, not in order to complain, but as an excuse for not going into it himself as fully as he had done on former occasions, when both he and the Prime Minister gave very fully the reasons which prompted the Government to refuse a rebate. There had been several reductions of the sugar duty from time to time, and in no case was a rebate granted. These reductions had been made by Chancellors of the Exchequer belonging to both parties. Mr. Gladstone on three occasions reduced the sugar duties, and never gave a general rebate. He gave short notice exactly as the Government had done on the present occasion. Sir Stafford Northcote did the same thing, and he gave no rebate. The hon. Member had referred to the case of the corn duties, but that was very different. Corn was the principal food of the people, and there was a real danger—indeed, as a matter of fact, corn was being held back for the time that the duty would be taken off—there was a real danger that there would be a scarcity of corn unless arrangments had been made by the Treasury to grant a rebate in order to bring corn into the market at once. That was not done in order to meet pecuniary losses to dealers in corn, but purely in order to meet the general convenience of the public. But there was no danger of that kind in this case, and there had been no real inconvenience. He admitted there must have been some loss to individuals, but, comparatively speaking, it was a small loss. Meantime, speaking of the trade as a whole, they had done very well by the imposition and reduction of the sugar tax. It was true that many individuals had come into the trade since the imposition of the tax, and did not derive any advantage when the tax was put on, but in the main the firms were the same. It was not so many years since the tax was imposed, and the loss, if it were divided among those who had come in since, would not be a very heavy loss, and certainly was not to be compared with the money that was made when the tax was imposed by Lord St. Aldwyn. Then the dealers took very good care to stock their warehouses with about three or four months stocks, while the usual stock was from a fortnight to three weeks, and all these three or four months' stock was put upon the market, not at the price at which it would have been sold but for the duty, but at the price plus the duty which had been imposed. All the great dealers were in the business when the tax was imposed, and if the balance of profit and loss were struck it would be found to be enormously to their advantage. The reduction of the duty was such an advantage to the trade as a whole that the comparatively small loss they suffered in respect of the fortnight or three-weeks stock they had in hand was a mere nothing compared with the benefits they had got. A member of the deputation who had waited upon him told him that the duty had cost him a considerable sum per annum which he could not put off on his customers. He saw no real reason for depriving the revenue of the year of something like £200,000.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD: £40,000.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was sorry to say that that was not the case. If it had been merely a matter of £40,000 it would not have been worth quarrelling about. Unfortunately, it was a good deal more. There were other sections of the trade which would come forward and say: "If you have granted a rebate to the saccharin and glucose people, why have you not given it to us?" And if they granted it to one, they could not possibly refuse it to another. He had got to deal with all those who were interested in some way or other in the reduction of the sugar duty, and in order to meet the demands of all those cases he should at least have to find £150,000 to £200,000. He did not think he was justified in doing it, having regard to the fact that this was a reduction and not an increase. Since they were really by this Budget enormously benefiting the trade itself, they ought to take the profit and the loss, seeing especially that the profit was very much larger than the loss.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said he desired, on behalf of a small body of men who had been made to suffer in their pockets, to support the Amendment. He had made the most careful inquiry into the amount of stocks held, and he believed that the amount of loss to the Exchequer would not exceed more than £40,000.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: For their own particular business.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said that the amount involved in the words of the Amendment before the Committee did not exceed £40,000. The point was considered very carefully in connection with the corn duty, when the House of Commons declined to inflict hardship on a few men in the trade. It was on behalf of the few individuals who had been obliged to carry stock for the purposes of their business that they urged that this small sum should be made good to them.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 53; Noes, 272. (Division List No. 192.)

AYES.

Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birm'gham)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Dalrymple, Viscount
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton

Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanier, Beville
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. M'Arthur and Mr. Harmood-Banner.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hn. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Cifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S.
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)

O'Grady, J.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (St ffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, Sir John H. (Denbighs.
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomasson, Franklin
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Vivian, Henry
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) said he presumed that the Government had reduced the duty from ½d. to a ¼d. in the interest of the poor consumer of this country, but it was a moot point as to whether it would be of any benefit to them. When the hon. Member for Preston moved a similar reduction last year, he remembered it was opposed by the Government. The hon. Member then urged that, although this reduction might not at once benefit the consumer of sugar, it must do so ultimately. That view was quoted by the Prime Minister, then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but the right hon. Gentleman supported it in a rather negative fashion because he declined to accept the Amendment. He argued that sooner or later the small reduction on the sugar duty might get down to the consumer, but that the process would be so slow that the ultimate benefit to the consumer would only be reached after a considerable time. He then went on to argue that a very small reduction of the sugar duty would benefit some of the powerful interests which had been raising considerable agitation to get it reduced or abolished altogether. He also pointed out that the people who would really benefit would be principally the manufacturers of mineral waters and confectioners. The intention of the Government, in moving the reduction of the duty, was to pacify some of their most hearty supporters who last year were placed in a somewhat awkward position. The first year the present Government came into power they moved a reduction of 1d. in the pound on tea, and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer argued that that reduction would benefit the consumer. When a further reduction of 1d. was moved the next year, the right hon. Gentleman felt quite satisfied that it would not give any material advantage. It was rather hard to reconcile the two attitudes of the right hon. Gentleman. He (Mr. Hicks Beach) ventured to submit to the Committee that the reduction of the sugar duty by one-half would benefit manufacturers of mineral waters and confectioners much more than the humble consumer in the country or big towns. The reduction meant that the duty per lb. instead of being ½d. would be about ¼d. It was very doubtful whether the purchaser of a pound of sugar would get the full benefit of the reduction or any benefit at all. It was quite obvious that the person who purchased less than a pound would get no benefit at all. He wished now to draw the attention of the Committee to another aspect of the question. When the Government first proposed the reduction, they estimated for an expenditure in the current year on old-age pensions of £1,200,000, the Prime Minister informing them that the scheme would cost about £6,000,000 the first full year, but in the course of the debates on the Bill, the Estimate of the cost in the first full year had risen first to £6,500,000 and finally to between £7,500,000 and £8,000,000. Furthermore, by a curious piece of legislation, they were legislating, not only for this year and next year, but for their possible successors in 1910, and the country would then have to face an expenditure on old-age pensions of between £10,000,000 and £11,000,000. The passage of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, therefore, had put a very different complexion upon the financial affairs of the country. If it was clear that the cost of the estimated scheme in 1909–1910 had risen from £6,000,000 to £7,500,000 or £8,000,000, it was, he thought, also obvious that the provision of £1,200,000, which the Government had made for this year, would be quite inadequate. It was, therefore, plain that the Government would have to find before the end of the current year more money for the Old-Age Pensions Bill than they were prepared to find when they introduced the Budget. They had had a most disquieting statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Addressing the Corporation of the City of London at a banquet about a week ago, he announced that he had to face a "stunning deficit, a falling revenue and a declining trade," in the current year. That was a most remarkable statement for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have made. If he remembered rightly, the Prime Minister and the right hon. Gentleman in the Second Reading debate on the Finance Bill, were careful to explain that although the prospects of increased trade during the current year were not very bright, yet they felt confident that the general trade of the country had passed through its most acute period of depression, and that they might therefore hope for a happy fulfilment of their Budget expectations. It was curious how quickly the opinions of the present Government changed. They had heard that the provisions the right hon. Gentleman had made in the Budget were not likely to be fulfilled and we were this year likely to be faced with a "stunning deficit." He therefore suggested to the right hon. Gentleman that he was not doing right in reducing the sugar duty by half. It was obvious that the right hon. Gentleman had not thought out the means by which he was going to provide money next year to carry out the old-age pensions scheme, because he had said recently he would have to rob someone's hen-roost, but he was not yet certain whose. The Government had left the Committee in a state of grievous uncertainty, and when they framed the Budget had obviously not the slightest idea where they were going to get the money from for old-age pensions. The right hon. Gentleman knew that his old-age pensions scheme would cost him £1,500,000 or £2,000,000 more than he anticipated, and knew he would have to rob a hen-roost next year to pay for it, and therefore he ought not to make a bid for the popular vote by reducing the sugar duty in this way. The reduction could only benefit the confectioners and the mineral water manufacturers and would not benefit the consumer in any way whatever. He submitted that the right hon. Gentleman should not reduce the sugar duty until he saw in what state the country was at the beginning of next year. The Government, by reducing the sugar duty this year, were making a mistake which the right hon. Gentleman would seriously repent when he had to produce his Budget in the coming year. He might be told that the omission of this Clause would entirely upset the Budget and the sugar trade throughout the country, because the reduction came into force on 18th May, so that it had been in force for some two months; but that was no argument at all. The House had a right to complain of the way in which they had been treated with regard to this Budget. It was now the 14th July, and this was the first opportunity they had had of discussing its individual provisions in Committee. It was the latest date upon which a Budget had ever been discussed in Committee for many years past. He entered his protest against such a proceeding on the part of a Liberal Government, who spoke so loudly at the general election of the care that ought to be taken in examining the Estimates and making provision for the payment. He protested against the discussion on the Estimates being so long delayed in Committee. He opposed the Clause.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that during the discussion connected with the old-age pensions scheme he had more than once supported the extension of the proposals of the Government. When challenged by hon. Gentlemen opposite as to how he would meet the deficit which those proposals would create he had pointed out that the Government had it in their power to extinguish the deficit by retaining in their hands the fiscal facilities they possessed and refusing to reduce the sugar duties. He retained that view. In fact his view went a little beyond that. In view of the great obligations which the Government were incurring it was reckless and dangerous finance to surrender any portion of the present revenue. But if it was wise and the Government thought it wise to count on undisclosed resources in order to provide the revenue required under these proposals, sooner than remit this particular tax they should have amplified their resources by retaining the duty on sugar and made their proposals less unequal, less partial, less unjust, and unfair than they were at present. Upon this question he should adhere to the course which he had already announced he would take. He thought this Bill was inherently bad, and it was not possible to deal with it by detailed Amendments in Committee. What they required was not a change here and there, but an alternative scheme, complete and homogeneous, dealing with the whole financial situation. Under those circumstances, although he sympathised with the views of his hon. friend who opposed the clause, and although he was greatly tempted in the interests of national finance to vote with him in order to preserve their sources of revenue to meet their great and growing liabilities, he should pursue the same course and leave to the Government the whole responsibility for the financial situation which they were creating. As he had refrained from voting for reductions which under other circumstances and with a different Budget he should have gladly supported, so he should refrain from voting for the retention of a tax which he believed was absolutely necessary on a broader system of national finance.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the clause was being opposed in order to protest against a reduction of the sugar duty. The Government had already been pressed from all quarters of the House to abolish the sugar duty altogether. He did not think at the present moment that any good purpose would be served by going into the question of the sugar duty at any great length, because they had already had two or three debates in which the matter had been thoroughly discussed. He thought the Government were thoroughly justified in their action for this reason. Sugar was not merely a food, but the raw material of several very prosperous industries which provided considerable employment for a large number of people, and when a considerable tax was imposed on sugar it must necessarily impair, embarrass, and restrict the operations of those particular industries. To that extent, the Government, by reducing by more than half the tax upon sugar, must encourage and assist those industries. He should have thought that they would have commanded the blessing of the right hon. Gentleman in this attempt to assist British industries. The right hon. Gentleman had dealt at some length with some remarks which he made in the City, and stated that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had informed the bankers that trade was worse than last year, that the revenue was falling, and that he should have a considerable deficit to meet this year. He simply stated on that occasion three undeniable facts. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that he objected to the reduction of this duty because it would not benefit the consumer. That was not the view of the consumer himself nor of those who dealt with the consumer. The Civil Service Supply Association had published an announcement in a special document in the following terms: "Sugar. Alteration in duty. Reduced prices." That was the view of those who dealt directly with the consumer. Sugar was used largely by the working classes, and they must be benefited because there had been a reduction in the price, and the right hon. Gentleman could find that out for himself if he inquired from his grocer. He did not think any good object could be served by denying that fact. He agreed that if they had simply split the duty by one-half the consumer would not have benefited so much and the reduction might have gone into the pockets of the dealers, but it was a reduction of over one-half, and so it went largely into the pockets of the consumer. They had reduced the taxation on an article which was consumed in the poorest households in the country, which was a necessity of life, and the taxation of which bore rather heavily upon the poorest part of the population. They had reduced taxation upon an article which was a raw material in a number of industries in this country, and which provided excellent employment for scores of thousands of people. He was inclined to think that some of the right hon. Gentleman's constituents would benefit by this reduction, but he knew that all over the country there were industries which would benefit, and it would tend to give employment to British labour. For those reasons he thought the Government were justified in making the reduction.

*MR. SNOWDEN said he had an Amendment down on the Paper for the rejection of this clause. He should not, however, in view of the terms of the hon. Member's Motion, be able to follow him into the division lobby. The reasons why he had put down his Amendment were those which he had given that afternoon against indirect taxation. He was anxious that something should be done to lessen the very unfair burden of taxation which rested upon the poorest part of the population, and in support of that argument he would like to quote from an authority familiar to hon. Members opposite—he referred to the very useful handbook compiled for the use of Liberal platform men, by the right hon. Gentleman who now occupied the position of Chief Secretary for Ireland—

> "In his 1901 Budget speech Sir M. Hicks-Beach stated that the average consumption of sugar is 56 lb. per head per annum. In a labourer's family the consumption of sugar is a pound a head per week. In a family of six persons a tax of ½d. a pound means an increased weekly expenditure on sugar alone of 3d. a week. The extra cost of jam and other food, of which sugar is a large constituent part, almost certainly raises this extra burden of taxation to 4½d. per week. A tax of 4½d. a week is very little to a rich man; it is very much to a man earning 15s. a week, and there are tens of thousands of families in Great Britain and Ireland where the weekly earnings are even below this figure. It is true that an agricultural labourer pays no income-tax, but nearly half the national revenue from taxation is provided by the taxes which the working classes already pay on tea, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, beer, spirits, and tobacco. On 15s. a week a tax of 4½d. is the equivalent of an income-tax of 6d. in the £."

Under the Bill now before the Committee the sugar tax was to be reduced by a half, but there still remained a tax of from £3,000,000 to £4,000,000 a year. That worked out at 1s. 7d. per head of the population. That meant about 7s. 6d. a year for sugar tax per family. But that did not represent the whole amount taken out of the pockets of the consumers, for there was no allowance made for the trade profits on the tax. The Prime Minister eighteen months ago gave a reason for maintaining the sugar duty which, to his mind, was the most astounding ever put forward; he said that the tax was very remunerative as it brought in £6,000,000 a year. That was the best reason the right hon. Gentleman could give for its retention. Surely that was an argument which would support the most nefarious taxation ever put on. What was wanted was that the righteousness of a tax should be justified, and neither the Prime Minister nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be prepared to justify the retention of the tax on its merits. He could quote dozens of statements by the Prime Minister on this point, but he would only give one. The right hon. Gentleman, referring to the sugar tax, said:—

> "The tax is vicious in principle, it is burdensome in its incidence, unequal in its operation as between classes and interests."

The late Chancellor of the Exchequer had complained that in his speech on the reduction of the tea duty he had not suggested some compensating source of revenue. He was under the impression that he would not be in order in making such a proposal. A penny in the £ on the income-tax would bring in nearly all the loss which would accrue from the loss of the sugar duty, and at present the people who paid income tax could afford it far better than those who had to pay the sugar duty. It had been said that sugar was not only a necessary of life, but the raw material of a great industry. The consumer was not going to gain in the purchase of the products of that industry, such as jam and sweets, by the reduction which the Government had made. There would be no reduction in the price, but the reduction might benefit the trade. He was not there particularly to champion the trade, but if it was going to benefit the trade, it might also benefit the work-people who were engaged in it. When the sugar tax was imposed six or seven years ago a striking case came under his own observation. A skilled workman in a confectionery establishment before the imposition of the tax had an average income of £3 a week, but after the tax was imposed he could not earn more than 30s. a week. He had no doubt that that case was typical of a considerable number. Therefore, if the half reduction which the Government now proposed affected the trade to that extent, he welcomed it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had opposed the suggested repeal of the sugar tax on the ground that next year the Government would require all the revenue they could get to meet their liabilities. He himself wanted the repeal of the sugar tax, because he did not want the Government to get it for the purpose of financing their old-age pension scheme. He objected to people being kept in poverty for fifty years in order to provide money for a scheme of which only a small proportion would derive the benefit. He and his friends wanted the money to be raised, not by taxes on the necessaries of life, but by taxes on those who would never feel the additional taxation placed on them. Owing to the form in which this Amendment had been moved it would be impossible for him to support it.

Clause agreed to.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND moved to reduce the duty on tobacco, unmanufactured, grown in Ireland, and containing 10 per cent. or more of moisture, from 2s. 10d. to 2s. 8d. He felt bound to raise this question, because he had been asked to do so by the tobacco-growers of Ireland. He acknowledged the sympathetic way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had already dealt with the subject, for there was no doubt that he had gone some way towards meeting their demand. They were very much obliged to him for that. He wished to point out that the Treasury allowance of 2d. on Irish-grown tobacco which had been made was not really an adequate allowance. He hoped his Amendment would be accepted, for while it would only involve a small matter to the revenue in regard to money, it would be a great benefit to the tobacco-growers. He quite admitted what the right hon. Gentleman had done for them, and they were very grateful for it; but he asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he could not possibly extend this rebate.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 26, to leave out the words '2s. 10d.,' and insert the words '2s. 8d.'"—(*Mr. William Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the word '10' stand part of the clause."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had gone a very long way to meet the case presented to him with so much skill, and he thought the hon. Member ought to be satisfied. He trusted that the Amendment would not be pressed.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he was sure that when he explained the reasons for his next Amendment he would get some sympathy in the House.

The fact was that more than ten years ago he introduced a Bill for the purpose of repealing the law which prohibited tobacco-growing in Ireland. Everyone knew how heart-breaking it was to have a measure in which he was interested opposed year after year, no matter how late he lay in wait at all hours of the night to get it slipped through. At the end of those ten years he had his Bill passed unanimously by the House, and he had gone to the House of Lords to see the Royal Assent given to his little Act. He was delighted to find that the object of that Act was embodied almost word for word in the Finance Bill they were now discussing. He had read it with the greatest possible pleasure—even with exultation,—until he came to the words which repealed "The Irish Tobacco Act, 1907." So that his little Act had hardly breathed, its lungs had hardly been inflated when it was put out of existence! It was a great honour to have it embodied in the Finance Bill; it was a poor thing, but his own; why kill it? Nobody could expect him to sit silent and allow his Act to be repealed; it was the most painful thing that had happened to him since 1885, when he found it necessary to vote for the extinction of his own constituency, the borough of Wexford. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to meet him when he moved the Amendment standing in his name.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 23, to leave out the words 'and the Irish Tobacco Act, 1907.'" —(*Mr. William Redmond.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he quite appreciated the parental pride and anxiety which the hon. Member had felt about his Act, and the very pathetic appeal with he had made. He would assure the hon. Gentleman that this was not a case of infanticide on his part. The child was not destroyed, but simply translated into a more exalted and more permanent sphere by being embalmed in the Budget of the year. He would be very happy to respond to the hon. Gentleman's appeal by having something put in on the margin about bringing into force and re-enacting the Irish Tobacco Act of 1907. He hoped that would meet the hon. Gentleman's views.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said that, as a matter of fact, he could not accept the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said it was perfectly clear that tobacco-growing in Ireland would not be arrested, even if this Act were repealed. As he understood the matter, before that Act was passed there was a prohibition of tobacco-growing in Ireland. His friend's Act repealed the prohibition and this Clause in the Finance Bill now proposed to repeal the Act which repealed the prohibition.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said that if the right hon. Gentleman would read subsection (3) he would find that it contained all that his Act prrovided for. If that was not the case he should have a lot more to say.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he thought subsection (4) covered the case.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said that before the matter was departed from he thought he ought in common justice to say that every Chancellor of the Exchequer before whom he had brought the matter, including the present Prime Minister and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, had given encouragement and support to the matter, and the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, he must in fairness acknowledge, met them very favourably.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4:

*MR. SEARS (Cheltenham) moved an Amendment providing for the consolidation of the Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue services, which he said would be a measure of real economy and efficiency. He did not think anyone would dispute that there was room for reform, and he would not be exaggerating when he said that reform was more necessary in the Customs than in probably any other branch of the service. He desired that the reform should be in the direction of absorption, rather than of reconstruction, and that the smaller and less efficient Department should be absorbed in the larger and more efficient. The proposal which the Government had brought forward was one which would break up the entire machinery of the Inland Revenue, and it was proposed to construct new machines out of the old parts. Many of these parts would be unfitted for their new positions, and altogether unequal to the new work which they would have to perform. The work of absorption was begun by Mr. Gladstone in 1882. Why should it not be completed on his lines? It would be an infinitely simpler task, and the lines were much sounder than those which were proposed in the present Bill. In the evidence he gave before a Committee of the House in 1888, Mr. Gladstone said he found the traditions of the Board of Customs did not come up to the traditions of Somerset House. The change from the malt duty to the beer duty was promoted by the Board of Inland Revenue. The Board of Customs in dealing with the change in the wine duty never felt they could make any suggestion, and undoubtedly their advice was that they should continue as they were. He was then asked—

> "Then your idea would be that the Customs should be merged with the Inland Revenue Board and not *vice versa*?"

And he replied—

> "Undoubtedly; if the amalgamation takes place, I hope to see the Inland Revenue Department continuing to be the dominant element in the compound."

That was a clear expression of opinion upon the identical situation to that which was now before them. In answer to a question he had been told that the circumstances to-day were not what they were then, but these words of Mr. Gladstone's were just as applicable to the present circumstances as when they were uttered. So far as size and efficiency were concerned, there could be no comparison between the Inland Revenue and the Customs. The organisation of the Inland Revenue was spread over the whole country, whereas the Customs was confined to the seaports. It seemed to him that the only course to follow in any amalgamation, and that which would create the least disturbance, was to complete the work of absorption which Mr. Gladstone began in 1882. Another very important point was that the Excise branch of the Inland Revenue had a thorough acquaintance of the work of the Customs and therefore absorption by that branch would be a very simple matter. Besides the warehouses which were under the control of the Excise, forty-two warehouses were transferred from the Customs to the Inland Revenue by Mr. Gladstone, effecting a saving at that time of £15,000 a year. The Excise officials therefore understood all the important work of the Customs, but, on the other hand, the Customs officials knew nothing about the distinctive work of the Excise. The work of the Excise was infinitely more varied, intricate, and responsible. It required practical and scientific knowledge which could only be acquired as the result of a life's study in the work of the Department. There was not a single Customs officer who knew anything about this important and intricate work of the Excise, who knew anything about distilleries, breweries, rectifying houses, glucose factories, and methylating premises——

*THE CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. Member there is a rule in this House against the reading of speeches. He seems to me to be reading every word.

*MR. SEARS said he had got extensive notes, but he was certainly not reading his speech. The Customs Board was not only incapable so far as the special work of the Excise was concerned. Its general incapacity was pointed out to the House by Mr. Gladstone. Sir Algernon West, in his "Recollections" quoted the opinion of Mr. Gladstone to the following effect:

> "The Customs Board was, and always had been, very behind; he had never had but one suggestion from them in all his long experience, and that was the penny duty on all packages, which he had at once been forced to give up and run away from like a dog with its tail between its legs. He wondered at the cause of the difference in the traditions of the two Departments."

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: What is the date of that?

*MR. SEARS said it was in 1886. At the time Mr. Gladstone was speaking, all the principal posts in the Inland Revenue were occupied by practical men. The position in the Customs was just the reverse. The Chairman of the Customs then, as now, was not a practical man. The members of the Board had no practical experience of the work, the advisers were in the same position, and the men who occupied the chief outside posts of control were also men without practical training. The other day, in answer to a Question, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury had to admit that only one of the Inspectors of Customs was a practical man, and that there were seven clerical inspectors. That was quite sufficient to explain the condition of things of which Mr. Gladstone complained and which existed now. Nearly all the principal posts in the Customs Department were in the hands of men who had had no practical training. That was quite sufficient to explain the unbusinesslike methods which prevailed throughout the Customs Department. He might give some illustrations. Twenty-six years ago the Customs had the centralised system of clearing goods out of warehouse. If a man wanted to clear his goods out of warehouse he had to go through all the formalities of obtaining an order, and then go to the warehouse one to three miles away. Under the Excise system, on the other hand, the trader had only to go direct to the warehouse, and the officer in charge there was armed with full power to clear his goods. There was no needless waste of time and no unnecessary inconvenience or expense. The Customs Board at that time modified its method and conformed to the better method of the Excise, but they had now lapsed into their old and wasteful methods of twenty-six years ago. He might point to the numerous and unnecessary staff of the Customs and the duplication of work. The warehouse staff had to make three different returns to three different Departments, viz., the book-keepers at clerical centres, the Accountant Controller-General, and the Statistical Department. On the other hand, the Inland Revenue, although they were doing precisely similar work, made return to only one branch. That was a much more simple, cheap, and efficient process. Were these wasteful methods of the Customs to be the standard methods for the entire service if the Excise was transferred to the Customs Department? Their methods of stocktaking were of the loosest. In 1903 the balance sheet of the warehouse transferred to the Inland Revenue showed stock representing £1,200 of duty, but there was not a single package of goods in the warehouse. A very loose and unsatisfactory condition of things therefore prevailed, and he thought a Board with these unbusinesslike methods was not the Board to take over the large and important duties of the Excise. The proposal, it was said, was brought forward on the personal advice of certain distinguished officials, but no inquiry had been held, and the practical men at the head of the Department had not been consulted. He thought there was other and more important advice which they might take. He had already quoted the opinions of Mr. Gladstone, and there was the opinion expressed by practical men. In the *Revenue Review* for May there appeared an editorial article written by an able, experienced, and well-informed outdoor official. The writer said—

> "With all due respect to the distinguished officials who have had experience of the inner working of the two offices, we may venture to say that they have evidently not advised Mr. Asquith of the huge difficulties in the way of a complete amalgamation of the two Departments, and they can have but a faint conception of the extraordinary ramifications of the Excise Department. Was any practical official of the Excise Department consulted? And by practical official we mean not any ornament of the indoor branch, but a man who has learned his duties in passing through all the grades of the outdoor branch, and in doing so, qualified

himself to be a real live practical adviser of the Board. Timely consultation with such officials would surely have prevented this catastrophe to the Excise branch of the Inland Revenue, this ill-advised scheme which may, on the face of it, appear to make for economy, but which, when the varied duties now performed by Excise officials are provided for, will scarcely result in such, and will certainly not, so far as the work performed by the Excise Department is concerned, result in greater efficiency."

He did not wish to trespass on the patience of the Committee, but, on the other hand, he thought he had made out a clear case. Here was a proposal which, according to the opinion of men who had had practical experience of the service—and they were the only practical men, so far as he knew, who had expressed any opinion on the subject; those with knowledge of the Department had not been consulted—was condemned as one which, instead of making for economy and efficiency, was likely to lead to disorganisation of the important Excise service. He could not, therefore, allow this proposal to pass without entering a protest.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 25, to leave out from the word 'transfer,' to end of line 37, and insert the words 'from the Commissioners of Customs to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue the management of any Customs duties which are under the management of the Commissioners of Customs at the time the order is made, and to transfer all the powers and duties of the Commissioners of Customs to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. (2) If an order is made under this section such order shall include the amalgamation of the Board of Customs with the Board of Inland Revenue and the disposal of the Customs House in Thames Street.'"—(*Mr. Sears.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. HOBHOUSE thought the Committee at this late hour would agree with him that he should not weary them with detail raised by his hon. friend. But he would like to make a very brief but clear statement of the reasons for this alteration. The reasons were practical ones, and were dictated by considerations of economy and efficiency. The Committee would remember that the amount of revenue which was raised by the Inland Revenue and Customs jointly came to something like £130,000,000. Up to the present moment the amount of money which had been under the control of the Customs was something like £30,000,000, and that under the Inland Revenue was about £100,000,000. Under the proposed amalgamation the division between the Inland Revenue and the new Board of Customs and Excise would be about £50,000,000, so that the division of money between the two authorities would be about equal. But a much more important division was that of work. Under the new arrangement the Customs and Excise would deal entirely with goods in their collection of revenue, while the Inland Revenue's work would be entirely personal—that was to say, they would deal with the collection of death duties, stamps, etc., whereas the new Board of Customs and Excise would deal entirely with goods which were subject to Customs or Excise duties. At the present moment the duties of the Customs and Excise led them to use bonded warehouses, Customs goods were to be found in Excise warehouses and Excise goods in Customs warehouses. The amalgamation of these two bodies, therefore, would lead to the removal of the present anomalies, and would enable the staffs to be amalgamated, producing economy and despatch of business. He did not think he could go into questions raised by the hon. Gentleman more than to say that the proposed amalgamation so far as he could find was exceedingly popular with the trade. He could quote, if necessary, extracts from trade journals to say how delighted they were at the proposed alteration, leading, as they thought it would, to the despatch of business and to economy and efficiency which were of the first importance to them. He trusted his explanation would be satisfactory to the Committee.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he did not intend to raise any large question at that period of the sitting. He thought it was difficult for anyone except a responsible Minister to weigh exactly the balance of advantages, but he could quite believe there might be advantages in the course the Government had taken. At any rate, he saw no changes proposed under this clause, and the almost revolutionary change that was proposed to be brought about in the conditions under which a very efficient and deserving body of public officers worked.

Mr. HICKS BEACH said he quite agreed that it was inconvenient to discuss this important change at that hour, but it was the only opportunity they had, and he thought that before the House actually sanctioned the transference of very great powers from one department of the State to another, they ought to have a little more information than the Secretary of the Treasury seemed to think was necessary. So far as he could gather from the hon. Gentleman's previous statement, it meant the transference of the collection of about £60,000,000 of revenue from the Inland Revenue to the Customs, and he informed the Committee that this change would be of very great advantage to the country at large, because it would produce economy and also efficiency and despatch of business. The hon. Gentleman quoted statements from various trade journals to the effect that the proposed change was viewed with gratitude. They were all agreed that the taxes of the country, however pleasant they might be to some people, and however unpleasant to others, ought to be collected with as great economy as possible to the Exchequer and as little inconvenience as possible to the trading community. The hon. Gentleman told them very briefly that this change would produce economy in collection, but he gave no reason to show how that economy was going to be produced. If he did, then he was afraid he misunderstood the hon. Gentleman. If the hon. Gentleman could give the Committee in a very few words the reason which led him to make that statement he thought the Committee would be grateful to him. He could only conclude that it would be brought about by some change in the wages of those Excisemen who were to be transferred to the Customs Department. So far as he knew, the wages in the Customs and Excise services were very much the same, but he presumed if the hon. Gentleman was going to produce some economy that those public servants who were now serving their country in the Excise Department were to suffer some loss of wages, as a result of the transference. He sincerely hoped that was not the case, but he would like some assurance from the hon. Gentleman. He thought that when some sort of change of this sort was going to be carried out, they ought to be told what the views of the two departments were. He did not think it would be at all unconstitutional if the hon. Gentleman told them what were the opinions of the Board of Inland Revenue and of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Customs. Of course, if it was asking for information which it was not the habit of the Government to give, he would not press the point, but he thought it would be a great advantage to the Committee if the hon. Gentleman could say what were the opinions of the heads of the departments with regard to these important changes.

Mr. HOBHOUSE assured the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down that the heads of the Customs Department and the Inland Revenue were very desirous of making the change indicated. He neither knew nor cared whether it was constitutional to state that they were so desirous. The hon. Gentleman ought to know that such a change could not possibly have taken place without their assent. In reply to the hon. Member for Hoxton, it was impossible to say at that moment what the conditions of service would be when the two staffs were amalgamated. They must first of all get the assent of the House to the amalgamation of the staffs; but the hon. Gentleman might rest assured that, as he had already told the officers of both services, the greatest care would be taken for their interests when this change was made.

Several HON. MEMBERS: Where is the economy?

Mr. CLAUDE HAY said the hon. Gentleman had been appealed to by several hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House to defend what he meant by the economies to be effected under the proposed amalgamation. It was trifling with the House of Commons not to give an indication as to what arrangements would achieve the economy which he described as one of the great objects of the change. It was making a farce of the Committee.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness) said he did his best a few days ago to raise this question as it affected the men in outdoor employment, and the Secretary of the Treasury was courteous enough to receive a deputation from these men, who were thus enabled to lay their case before him. It seemed utterly unreasonable to expect that the Minister who had charge of the matter could give the result of that interview yet. There had not been time in which to consider the various points put before the official on that occasion. It seemed to him only reasonable to expect that a certain time should be allowed for consideration to be given to the matter put before the hon. Gentleman, and, therefore, it was inopportune for the hon. Member to press for an answer at that moment.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 5:

*SIR CLIFFORD CORY (Cornwall, St. Ives) said the Amendment which stood in his name if passed would extend the present duty of 1d. in full which was now charged on policies where the premium was 2s. 6d. per cent. or under to all voyage policies, irrespective of the amount of the premium. The mercantile community were grateful to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the concession he had made in reducing the duty on voyage policies where the premiums exceeded 2s. 6d. per cent. from 3d. per cent. to 1d per cent., but it was hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would go a step further and make it 1d. in full on all voyage policies. As the Prime Minister said in his introductory speech, "The vast majority of voyages are quite short—perhaps only a few days," and practically admitted did not justify a high duty. An *ad valorem* duty of even 1d. per cent. left this country at a disadvantage compared with other countries where such duties were not charged. The Amendment would secure uniformity if the duty were made 1d. in full on all voyage policies irrespective of the rate of premium, as in cases of fire insurance and every other form of insurance of which there were 41, except life, which had a special character of its own. The loss to the revenue would be inconsiderable if the Amendment were passed. The Prime Minister stated that the loss to the revenue by the reduction from 3d. per cent. to 1d. per cent. amounted to about £80,000, and the further reduction to 1d. in full would not amount to more than £40,000, less the amount which would accrue by the payment of the 1d. for policy, say a net reduction of about £35,000. It was not a very considerable sum, especially when the convenience and saving to the commercial community was considered, as by making the duty 1d. in full in lieu of the *ad valorem* system it would mean a considerable saving of labour to the Revenue Department, where the cost of collection would on an *ad valorem* basis be out of all proportion to the duty received. Furthermore, it would mean a great convenience and saving of labour to insurance companies and brokers, though the commercial community, the principals concerned, and being spared the calculation of duty in their invoices would most of all appreciate the concession, and, therefore, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to see his way to grant this concession.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 16, to leave out the words 'shall be substituted for threepence,' and to insert the words ' in full shall be substituted for threepence in respect of every full sum of one hundred pounds and also any fractional part of one hundred pounds thereby insured.' "—(*Sir Clifford Cory.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he could not help thinking that his hon. friend's Amendment was a little unreasonable. The Prime Minister when Chancellor of the Exchequer promised to consider the grievances of the commercial community, and he did so by introducing a proposal in the Budget which cost £80,000 to the revenue. Now it was said: "Well, you might as well go on to £120,000." That was what had happened with regard to every concession that had been made, and he did not think it was encouraging to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that every concession he made should be used as an argument for further concessions. He quite agreed that there was a certain amount of inconvenience, but if his hon. friend would suggest how that inconvenience could be redressed without a further raid on the Exchequer he would consider it. If between this and next year his hon. friend could find some means of not breaking further into the revenue he would be very happy to consider the question of a fixed charge instead of an *ad valorem* one, but he could not possibly face the contingency of a further loss.

Amendment negatived.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said the Amendment that he had put down to substitute 5s. for 10s. as the stamp duty chargeable under Section 9 of the Inland Revenue Act, 1906, was intended to mitigate a very severe and oppressive stamp duty which was imposed upon small holders as against large ones. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway were very fond of talking about the burden of taxes on the poor, and that the poor should be relieved. If they believed in those principles they would support this Amendment. Originally the stamp duty on such things as compensation for unexhausted improvements was an *ad valorem* one starting at 3d. on sums up to £5, and going up to, he did not know how much, but something like £2, on large sums. In the Budget of 1906, for some reason which was not explained at great length to the House, and certainly was not clearly understood in the country, the duty was changed to a uniform one of 10s., and the effect of that was if the small holder had an arbitration award made of, say £10, he had to pay a duty of 10s., and if a farmer had an award made of, say £190, he only paid 10s. The object he had in view in putting down the Amendment was to call the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what he thought was a very great injustice on small holders in this matter. The present duty was so little known that in Whitaker's Almanack the change which was effected in the Budget of 1906 was not even noticed, and the stamp duties that prevailed before were to be found in Whitaker's Almanack of this year. He wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer—and he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would see there was a great deal of reason in what he asked—whether he could not see his way even without losing revenue to effect a change which would do justice to those for whom he was appealing. If the right hon. Gentleman agreed to his proposal in some other form by which he would not lose revenue, he would be perfectly prepared to withdraw the Amendment. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider the question because it was apparently one which affected a number of small people who could ill-afford to pay the duty.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 4, line 21, at end, to add the words 'and five shillings shall be substituted for ten shillings as the stamp duty chargeable under Section 9 of the Inland Revenue Act, 1906.'"—(*Mr. Bridgeman.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the hon. Member had put before him the difficult proposition how to reduce duty from 10s. to 5s. without reducing the revenue. The Amendment was only put on the Paper last night.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I asked a question about the matter some time ago.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was not quite sure of that point, but he would promise that if the hon. Gentleman would give him a few illustrations of the kind of cases to which he referred he would give the matter his very careful consideration, with a view to seeing if something could be done. He pointed out that the duty was introduced in 1906 as the result of pressure to reduce a grievance, though he could quite believe that in redressing one grievance they might create other grievances.

Amendment negatived.

Question proposed, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN rose to ask the Government whether, when this clause was disposed of, they would accept a Motion for the adjournment of the debate. He thought the Committee had carried on the discussion in a spirit of which the right hon. Gentleman could not complain. The time had been occupied pretty much in proportion to the membership of the various parties in the House, and in view of the advanced period of the morning and the fact that the next clause raised a question which was causing very considerable interest in the country he hoped that clause might be taken at a time when they were fresh and not wearied by prolonged discussion.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had had some hopes that they might be able to add Clause 6, but still he recognised fully what the right hon. Gentleman said. He thought he and the hon. Members who had been acting with him had treated the Government very fairly, and if the right hon. Gentleman made an appeal to the Government that they should not take the next clause to-night he would be perfectly prepared to respond to it. He knew perfectly well, judging by the experience to-day, that the Opposition would not take any unfair advantage to-morrow, but would assist the Government to get the Bill through in respectable time.

Clause agreed to.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN moved to report progress. Of course, he said, there were a good many questions to be discussed and they would have to sit after eleven o'clock to-morrow, but he was quite sure that on the Opposition side there would be no desire to prolong the debate beyond what was necessary in order to put matters properly before the House.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Austen Chamberlain*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again this day.

SEED POTATOES AND SEED OATS SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported without Amendment.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

WHALE FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Bill, as amended, considered.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry) said he had handed in a drafting Amendment which was rendered necessary, he was sure, by an oversight in the drafting of the Bill. Clause 1 laid down that licences must be issued by the Department, but if Clause 2 were allowed to pass in the form in which it stood, and it was desired to start a company in Ireland to carry on the industry they would have to come to London to register the company. He hoped the Amendment would be accepted. The Amendment was to add the words "or Ireland," in page 21, line 21, at the end.

***The VICE-PRESIDENT of the DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE for IRELAND** (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.): The words were inserted in Committee last night.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I have satisfied myself that the words were inserted in the Bill.

Bill read a third time and passed.

TELEGRAPH CONSTRUCTION BILL.

As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. CLAUDE HAY asked in reference to the power given to the Department to lop trees, what arrangement the Postmaster-General had made to ensure that the trees should be properly lopped. So far as he was aware, he did not believe the Postmaster-General had in his Department any qualified tree-lopper. The right hon. Gentleman had a large staff who might know a good deal about the constitution of telegraph poles and wires, but he did not suppose they knew much about horticulture, and though at first sight this might appear to be a small matter, those who appreciated the beauty of trees would recognise that an unskilled hand lopping a tree might ruin its beauty, and destroy the amenities of a place. A tree might be of priceless value to the beauty of a cottage, and he knew there was a strong feeling throughout the country on the matter. He sincerely hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make some very strict regulations as to the manner in which this lopping was to be carried out to give facilities for the erection of wires. Would the right hon. Gentleman besides issuing regulations appoint an officer who would be responsible to him for treating the trees kindly, and in a husbandlike manner?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he was perfectly aware that the question of lopping trees required consideration, and he thought the point was really met by the Amendment which was inserted in Committee, leaving it in the power of the owner himself to do the lopping.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at five minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 15th July, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Widnes Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill; Holderness Water Bill.—Moved, that the Order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bills read 2ª accordingly.

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.—Committed.

Holderness Water Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill.—Moved, That the Order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª; agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed, the Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Bradford (Rural) Order.

Holderness Water Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradford (Rural) Order).—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the five Lords appointed a Select Committee on the Central Ireland Electric Power Bill and other Bills, do form the Select Committee for the consideration of the Holderness Water Bill and the Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (so far as it relates to the Bradford (Rural) Order); read, and agreed to. All petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the Petitioners praying to be heard by Counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also Counsel for the Bills.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INDIA (NORTH-WEST FRONTIER).

Papers regarding—

Orakzais.—Request of certain clans to be taken under British Administration.

Zakka Khel Afridis.—Operations.

Mohmands.—Operations.

JUDICIAL STATISTICS (IRELAND) 1907.

Part I. Criminal Statistics.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

Correspondence relating to affairs in the East Africa Protectorate.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

HARWICH HARBOUR.

Abstract of the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of 31st March, 1903.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 8th July, 1908, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of auditor in the Local Government Board for Ireland, professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be acquired on the public service are required.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the member.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877.

Statute made by the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, on the 11th March, 1908, amending Statute 16, Clause 12, of the Statutes of the House.

Statute made by the Governing Body of Brasenose College, Oxford, on the 11th March, 1908, amending Statute III., Part II., 12, of the Statutes of the College.

Statute made by the Governing Body of All Souls' College, Oxford, on the 28th February, 1908, and sealed on 3rd March, 1908, amending Statute 12A, Clause 2, of the Statutes of the College.

Statutes made by the University of Cambridge (sealed on 27th March, 1908), amending Chapter VI., Statute B., Sections 12 and 13, Chapter VII., Statute B., Sections 2 and 4, and adding Paragraphs 8 and 9 to Chapter VII., Statute B., of the Statutes of the University.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No 152.)

SEED POTATOES AND SEED OATS SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL (No. 153).

WHALE FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL (No. 154).

TELEGRAPH (CONSTRUCTION) BILL (No. 155).

Brought from the Commons and read 1 and to be printed.

IRISH LAND PURCHASE.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: My Lords, I have given notice to call attention to the delays in connection with the provision and distribution of the funds required for the carrying out of the purposes of the Irish Land Act, 1903; to ask His Majesty's Government whether they propose to take any steps to secure the effective carrying out of the purchase provisions of the Act; and to move for Papers. I have done so in consequence of the lively dissatisfaction, and I think I may say the growing dissatisfaction, felt by all classes in Ireland at the increasingly slow progress that is being made.

There is no doubt whatever that at the time of the passing of the Act it was meant that the carrying out of its purchase provisions should be an expeditious proceeding. Mr. Wyndham stated, in fact, in so many words, that he hoped the purchase provisions would be completed in a period of fifteen years; and it is quite obvious to any one looking through the Act even in a most cursory manner that its provisions were drawn with the object of ensuring that the transfer of the land under the Act should be at a much more expeditious rate than we are accustomed to in the case of the transfer of property in land from one individual to another. The provision of the zones, the arrangements that were made to expedite the clearing of title, the enactment of a closing day, were all obviously meant to expedite administration, in the same way as the provision of the bonus was intended to expedite negotiations; and it is obvious, from the way the Act was originally worked, that the estimates in people's minds after the passing of the Act showed no difficulty or delay in being realised.

Shortly after the Act had been passed six or seven months was quite enough to get an estate through the Office of the Estates Commissioners. I am informed that even the Duke of Leinster's estate, which amounted to about half a million sterling, passed through all its stages in the short space of seven months. Latterly, the period from the originating application until the time of the receipt of the money by the owner has become lengthier and lengthier, and now there is a general belief in Ireland that it will be at least six or seven years before a landlord who arranges with his tenant to sell can hope to see his money, or before the tenant can get the advantage of the sinking fund. I think six or seven years in an extremely optimistic estimate. The time now required is very much longer.

At the present moment, roughly speaking, applications amounting to £62,750,000 are before the Estates Commissioners, and in all ways £21,500,000 have been distributed £19,000,000 have been distributed by the Judicial Commissioner and £2,500,000 have been advanced through other parties who deal with this matter. This subject has not been brought before your Lordships for over a year, but on 1st July last year my noble friend behind me, Lord Clonbrock, had the privilege of calling attention to it in this House; and it is interesting, I think, to compare the figures that he then gave with the figures that have been recently given us by the Government in order that we may inquire into the progress that has been made during the last twelve months. At about the same time last year £51,000,000 had been applied for, and just under £19,000,000 disposed of. My noble friend stated this latter figure to be £18,000,000, but the noble Lord opposite, Lord Denman, claimed that the figure was nearer £19,000,000—I accept, therefore, the Government figure. The average from the passing of the Act then worked out per annum at about £14,000,000 of property applied for, and just over £5,000,000 distributed. The position now is that £62,750,000 have been applied for, and £21,500,000 have been dealt with. The average now is £13,500,000 applied for per annum, and £4,600,000 distributed. Your Lordships will, therefore, notice that, as the result of the operations of the past year, the average amount distributed per annum since the passing of the Act has fallen from over £5,000,000 to £4,600,000.

But this figure does not show, I think, how serious the position has become. A year ago, as Lord Denman told us on July 1st, 1907, £19,000,000 had been distributed. Now £21,500,000 have been distributed. Therefore only £2,500,000 have been distributed as the result of the past twelve months working by the Estates Commissioners. Although, as I mentioned just now, the general idea is that a landlord or tenant will have to wait six or seven years for the completion of the purchase, at the rate of progress that has obtained during the past year it will be sixteen years before the last agreement that went into the Office of the Estates Commissioners is finally dealt with, and before the landlord receives his money and the tenant begins to pay his purchase annuities; or, to put it more simply, it will be eighty-five years before a tenant signing to-day will have the freehold of his farm vested in him.

LORD DENMAN: How does the noble Earl take his year to get the figure of £2,500,000?

* THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I am comparing the figures given by the noble Lord on July 1st, 1907, with those given on June 25th, 1908. I think, as a matter of fact, the exact period is between eleven and twelve months. The figures I am quoting are up to 31st May this year. I am assuming that the figures in both cases were up to date. The noble Lord, Lord Denman, speaking for the Government, told us last year, in plain language, that we could not expect any very much greater progress than had hitherto obtained—that is to say, we could not hope for very much more than £5,000,000 to be distributed annually. I am quite sure the noble Lord had no inkling of the fact that the progress during the last twelve months would be so very much slower than in the previous years. Still, as far as I am able to tell from these official figures, the progress of distribution of money by the Estates Commissioners has fallen during the past year to an alarming extent—to the extent of 50 per cent. That is a most serious matter. My noble friend Lord Clonbrock asked the direct question last year—

> "Why are you going so much slower than you did directly after the passing of the Act?"

I do not think that that question was directly replied to last year, but I should very much like to have a direct answer to it in the course of the debate to-day.

There has been no material diminution of the rate of progress in the Land Judge's Court or in the office of the Congested Districts Board. The delay evidently has taken place solely in the office of the Estates Commissioners. The position is bound to become very much more serious in the next six months; and for this reason. Your Lordships will remember that there is a provision in the Act which enables the Treasury to revise the amount of the bonus, if for certain reasons it is necessary to do so, and they obtain that power on 1st November this year. Now, if there is any revision of the bonus it will absolutely stop land purchase in

Ireland. Bargains have been going on for the last two or three years on the assumption that the bonus is to be 12 per cent., and the moment it is diminished you stop those bargains, and the parties will have to begin on an entirely new basis. Therefore, I think it would be a most lamentable thing if the amount of the bonus was varied; but that is not the point I wish now to put before your Lordships.

The point is this, that everybody in Ireland knows that there is danger of the bonus being varied on 1st November, and therefore great efforts will be made by landlords and tenants to get as many agreements signed as possible between now and 1st November, and the result will be an enormous increase in the number of agreements filed in the office of the Estates Commissioners. I have been in correspondence on another subject with one of the largest land agents who has already sold two or three great estates, and he informs me that he is at the present moment discussing sales to the amount of no less than £300,000, and this, of course, is being done under the spur of the fact that it is known that the agreements must be put in by 1st November; and if that is being done by one agent it is not unfair to argue that there will be an enormous increase generally. Therefore, though the block is serious now, it will be very considerably increased before your Lordships may again have an opportunity of discussing this subject.

My second Question is: Why is there any delay at all? Why was not the state of affairs that existed for five or six months, or longer, after the Act came into force, maintained throughout, or, at least, why was not the distribution kept up at greater speed? The answer is to be found in the Report of the recent Commission which sat under the Chairmanship of Lord Dudley. I do not think we could possibly over-estimate the value of the evidence that was given before that Commission, especially the evidence of members of Government Departments, which has given us insights into the working of these Departments that we shall not forget for many a long day. Mr. Commissioner Finucane said—

> "It depends entirely on the money. If we had £10,000,000 a year we could spend it without the least difficulty, if we had sufficient staff for the purpose."

Later on he said—

> "If you were to raise £30,000,000 to-morrow we could pay it all away in two or three years. It is a mere matter of increasing our staff for inspection, and so on."

Then this question was put—

> "We may take it, then, that the block is due to the fact that the money is not there?"

And Mr. Commissioner Finucane replied—

> "To nothing else—to want of money and staff."

Money and staff, therefore, are at the bottom of this matter, and that is admitted by the Government. If the man in the street were asked the cause of the slow working of the Act he would reply "money," and, as usual, I believe the man in the street would be wrong, since great as the evil under "money" may be, I think that there is far greater evil under the heading of "staff."

A story is told in Dublin—I relate it merely as gossip—to the effect that a Treasury official and an official of the Estates Commissioners were sitting over a friendly cup of coffee, and the Treasury official challenged the official of the Estates Commissioners to mention a single case of an estate in relation to which all questions of title and so on had been settled and in which the landlord was ready to receive the money, for which the money was not forthcoming. The story goes that the gentleman from the Estates Commissioners was unable to mention a single one. I tell that purely as a story; it may or may not have happened. The conversation may have taken place between a junior clerk in the office of the Estates Commissioners and a junior clerk at the Treasury; it may have taken place between the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself on the one side, and on the other the noble Lord opposite who took his seat yesterday (Lord MacDonnell of Swinford) and whom all Irishmen are most glad to welcome to your Lordships' House; but, whether the story is true or not, it certainly illustrates what is believed to be the case in Dublin. We believe that in every case in which the papers have been ready and in order the money has been distributed by the Estates Commissioners. That, of course, may be explained by saying that whereas the Treasury have given the Estates Commissioners very little money they have, at the same time, given them no more staff than was sufficient to distribute that amount.

I should be very surprised to hear that in no case have the Estates Commissioners made application for an increase of staff and been refused. But even if this is so the question of money is important, and it is evident that it is considered important by the fact that during the recess His Majesty's Government appointed a Departmental Committee of the Treasury, under the chairmanship of one of their Members, to inquire into the subject of the provision of money. I wish, first of all, to draw attention to the very peculiar terms of reference under which this Committee was appointed. They were appointed to inquire into Irish land purchase finance, but it was expressly laid down that they were to report how far the difficulties could be diminished or removed—

> "Without imposing any additional charge on the Exchequer."

I cannot help thinking that the present Prime Minister when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he appointed that Committee drew up those words of reference with a very merry twinkle in his eye. Why should it be altogether out of consideration that any cost of the present difficulty should be put upon the Imperial Exchequer? Whose fault, after all, is it? There were, your Lordships will remember, three parties to what may be called the land settlement of 1903.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): Four.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: Three main parties. I refer to the landlord, the tenant, and the State.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: And the Irish ratepayer.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: He is a part of the State; but, at the same time, the landlords and tenants of Ireland form a very large percentage of the Irish ratepayers and the attempt to confine the loss under these transactions to the Irish ratepayer is practically an attempt to confine it to the landlords and tenants, the parties to the bargain. What happened in 1903 was this. The State said it was to the public advantage—I will not say why, though I have always maintained that the reason was owing to the shortsightedness of the statesmen who passed the Act of 1881—that dual ownership in Ireland should cease and the land should pass from the landlord to the tenants, and that, in every case in which the landlords and tenants would agree to that transfer being made, the Treasury, that is to say the State, would lend the money, and would go further and provide the bonus which would ease over any difficulty in arriving at a price. The landlords and tenants have, to a large extent, made their arrangements, and now the State has difficulty in carrying out its side of the bargain. which is to provide the money.

The only hitch is that the State cannot provide the money as quickly as it is wanted for the carrying out of the Act. Why cannot the State provide it? Because under present conditions it costs too much to get the money. Now the State says in effect, to the parties—

> "I will set to work and see if I cannot provide the money without any loss to myself by seeing if the loss that is entailed can be made to fall on you."

That, in very bald language, is really the situation in which we find ourselves at the present moment as the result of the terms of reference that I have quoted. The block is simply to be found in the fact that the State cannot at the moment carry out her bargain fast enough, and the whole system of land purchase in Ireland is imperilled as a result. Any financial loss under the Act would not be due to an Irish cause, but to the depreciation that for the moment has come about in Imperial credit; and surely it is not unreasonable to say that any loss which occurs in connection with Imperial credit should be borne as an Imperial charge.

Landlords and tenants have, to a great extent, carried out their part of the bargain. The Attorney-General stated in the House of Commons the other day that the shortcomings on the part of the tenants in repaying their instalments were practically infinitesimal. I claim, too, that the landlords have expressed their willingness to sell at a fair price—at the price they were expected to ask in 1903. This brings me at once to the details of some of the paragraphs in the Report of Mr. Runciman's Committee. We are bound to regard this document as one of great importance, though I know it is only a Committee's Report and that we have not been definitely told by the Government that they intend to adopt its recommendations. But it is the sole evidence of the working of the Government mind on this subject, and it would be disrespectful if we passed it by without consideration.

The Committee were placed in a position of very great difficulty. They were asked to advise how the Act was to be financed in future without loss to the Imperial Exchequer. It is quite obvious that if there is to be a loss it must fall on somebody's shoulders. Whose shoulders were they to put it on? Not on the Exchequer. That was ruled out by their terms of reference. Not on the tenants directly. That would obviously be a breach of faith that no Treasury would even dream of attempting, and it is, perhaps, not too unkind to point out that any attempt to get the tenants to contribute further towards the financing of this Act would lead to the Government having a very lively time with the representatives of those tenants in another place. Then there remain only the wretched landlords. I think it is generally admitted, or at any rate, the idea seems to have been in the Committee's mind, that any considerable increase of the burdens upon the Irish ratepayer was not at the moment very practical politics. Could the loss in any way be thrown upon the landlord's shoulders? As regards agreements signed to date, no. The Committee recognised that in the most open manner. Landlords owning property of the value of 80,000,000 sterling have made agreements with their tenants on the basis of payment in cash, and cash they will have to have if they desire it.

The Earl of Donoughmore.

The Committee had to turn either to landlords who sign agreements after this date, in the hope of putting some of the loss on their shoulders, or to see if there was any landlord who, having signed already, would be foolish enough to allow some of the burden to be placed upon him now. Therefore they first of all set to work to try and show that certain of the landlords had been asking too much, and that it was not unreasonable, therefore, to put some of the loss that must occur on them. It is pointed out that there has been a fall in the price of trust securities—75 per cent. of the land in Ireland is in trust—and that this has operated greatly to the benefit of the landlord, affording opportunities for investing his purchase-money to so much greater advantage. The Committee go on to state, in paragraph 52, that the Irish Land Conference adopted, as a basis of land purchase, the payment of a capital sum securing the landlord's income at 3 per cent. or at 3¼ per cent. But they will now be enabled, say the Committee, so to invest the proceeds of the sale of their property as to obtain interest at 3½ per cent., and hence is drawn the suggestion that we could afford to accept a lower price or else that we had accepted too high a price and there was no great grievance in asking us to bear a little of the loss. I regret very much that the evidence taken by the Committee has not been published, in order that it might be known upon whose testimony the Committee came to a conclusion so utterly out of harmony with the real facts of the case.

Now, what happened? I wish to draw from the experience I have had of what has been done by a large number of landlords round me who have sold, and what has been done in a large number of estate offices with whose general policy in dealing with these matters I am acquainted. In Ireland estates are managed in larger units than in England. In England it is customary for a landlord to have his own agent, but in Ireland there are agents with large estate offices who see to the detailed management of an enormous number of acres spread all over the country, the object being that we desire, in the highly technical legal system with which we are concerned, to have the best possible advice on all questions that might arise. Therefore we have an opportunity of finding out the policy pursued over large areas of land.

When the question of the sale of an estate came up and the tenants approached the landlord, the landlord's mind naturally went to preserving his present net income, and that had been guaranteed him by the Land Conference Report. When landlords found, as those of us did who were negoitating shortly after the passing of the Act, that we could get a higher rate of interest upon the capital obtained by the sale of the land than 3¼ per cent. a change was made in the situation. When we found that the higher rate of interest would enable us to obtain our present income on a smaller amount of capital, we gave the benefit to our tenants and agreed to accept a lower price than we would have done upon the Land Conference terms. Therefore I say that the prices obtained under the Act of 1903 have, as a rule, ranged lower than the Land Conference terms, and that the suggestion which the Committee has made is not a fair one. I repeat that I would like to know on what evidence that statement was made.

Having made that assumption the Committee, in a later portion of their Report, go on to outline a method by which it would be possible to throw some of the loss upon the landlord. In paragraph 103 they say—

> "We therefore recommend that in cases which have reached the stage for making the advance, but for which cash is not immediately available, the landlords should be given the option of accepting their purchase-money in guaranteed 2¾ per cent. stock at the market price of the day if below par, subject, however, to a minimum price of £92, the bonus to be payable, as hitherto, in cash."

They go on to say, in paragraph 105—

> "We think it probable that a considerable number at any rate of those landlords whose agreements have only recently been concluded will prefer to avail themselves of the advantages which it (the option) offers rather than wait their turn in the issue of cash advances."

I would like to know on what evidence that statement is made. In paragraph 106 the Committee add—

> "We have suggested a minimum price of £92, because the yield of 2¾ per cent. stock at that quotation is approximately 3 per cent., and we consider that if the landlord is assured of a return of that amount on his purchase money (in addition to the receipt of his bonus in cash) he may, in some cases at any rate, be induced to hold his stock as an investment rather than throw it upon the market."

Subject to one reservation, to which I will refer in a moment, I have no objection to this option being offered in the hope of seeing whether anybody will be stupid enough to accept it. If His Majesty's Government are at all friendly towards this scheme, I sincerely hope they will not expect that any appreciable number of landlords awaiting the £40,000,000 which is now undisposed of will accept this offer. Why should they? They have been promised cash, and they know that cash would return them from £3 10s. to £3 13s. Why should any man in his senses, therefore, be expected to accept £3?

There are two other disadvantages in connection with this scheme. First, the minimum price at which landlords are to be offered the stock is 92. The average price of Guaranteed Land Stock last year was 84¾; it fluctuated between 88½ and 81½, and it is unlikely that the average will be any higher in future, because since last year another 5,000,000 sterling has been put on the market. So that the Committee's suggestion is that landlords should be offered £100 of stock at 92, which is only worth, on an average, £84 7s. 6d. Does anybody think that any landlord will accept this unless he is under the thumb of a mortgagee and is forced to accept it?

The mention of mortgagees brings me to my second point. In the Committee's scheme no mention whatever is made of superior interests such as head rents. A great many of these head rents are paid to the Government. Many of us have borrowed money from the Government in order to carry out permanent improvements on our estates, and land improvement charges as they are called are all repayable by instalments over, as a rule, a period of thirty years; but at the time of the sale of an estate they have to be redeemed in full. Again, there are Crown rents, paid to the British Treasury, all of which have to be redeemed at the time of the sale of the estate. Are we to be allowed to redeem these in stock worth £84 7s. 6d. which we are to say for the moment is worth 92? Nearly everybody knows the reputation of the British Treasury. When we have an obligation to the British Treasury every single farthing has to be discharged and discharged to the day and to the full. I shall be very interested to know whether, if the Treasury are to be allowed to give us stock worth on the average £84 7s. 6d., and which they are permitted to treat as if it was worth £92, we in our turn are to be allowed to perpetrate a similar financial swindle upon them when redeeming Crown rents.

There seems to be one remaining fatal objection to the scheme of the Committee. You have promised the landlords cash. I should have no objection whatever—and this is the reservation I alluded to a few minutes ago—to this offer of stock if I was perfectly certain that it would in no way act to the detriment of the man who stood out and insisted upon being paid in cash. If this option is to be permitted, it must be clearly laid down that the flow of cash into the office of the Estates Commissioners is to be in no way retarded. Without such a pledge, the inevitable result will be that you will be using the issue of this stock to save yourselves trouble in raising further gold. That would be a gross injustice to the landlords of Ireland. They have been promised cash, and they have a right to expect cash. I hope we shall have a definite pledge that, if some such scheme of options is to be tried, proper safeguards upon the lines I have sketched will be introduced. I do not wish to trouble your Lordships further on the subject of this Report. There are many other points that I object to in it, and several other inaccuracies, but they are not, perhaps, germane to the subject immediately under discussion, and I will therefore pass very briefly to the second part of the question—that of staff.

Have the Estates Commissioners sufficient staff? Do they make full use of the staff that they now have? We all know that the Estates Commissioners are very active-minded people, and that they are interested in very many schemes for the betterment of Ireland. It is clear, from the evidence given before Lord Dudley's Commission, that some of the Estates Commissioners have given a great deal of time and trouble to the working out of a scheme for an ideal Ireland which I am quite certain none of your Lordships will ever live to see. No one is to have more than £100 worth of land; everyone who wants it is to have £10 worth of land, and we are all to live happily ever afterwards. This has all been outside the province of the Estates Commissioners. Most people take a Saturday to Monday rest, and I can only say that I sincerely hope that it is in such times that this scheme has been worked out, and that the working of the Land Act has been in no way retarded by the expenditure of public time upon it. There is no doubt that a great deal of the time of the Estates Commissioners has been taken up in a way that nobody expected five years ago—namely, in the working of the Evicted Tenants Act.

The evicted tenants question has been allowed to grow into a very much larger question than anybody ever anticipated. The noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India considered the question so small in 1893 that he thought it would be solved by a sum nearer £100,000 than £250,000. Mr. Davitt, in 1899, suggested that it was only a question of 1,000 tenants, and we know that in 1903 Mr. Dillon mentioned £100,000 as the sum necessary. Therefore it is obvious that in everybody's mind it was a very much smaller question than it has been allowed to grow into, and a great deal of the time of the Estates Commissioners has been taken up in this way. I am not now going to argue against the proper administration of that Question, but unless you wish it to continue a block on the proper carrying out of the purchase provisions of the Act, you should appoint another Commissioner especially for this purpose or vastly increase the present staff.

I pass from the question whether they have sufficient staff, because we have not enough information to enable us to answer that, and I ask the second question. Do they make full use of the staff they have? A short perusal of the regulations made by the Lord-

Lieutenant on 15th March, 1906, containing instructions as to the inspection of estates shows, I think, quite conclusively that a great deal of the time of these inspectors, whom nobody in their senses would accuse of being idle men, is being wasted by unnecessary calls upon their attention to matters some of which have nothing whatever to do with the Commissioners. One of these regulations states that—

> "The inspector is desired to report upon the character of any demesne and how it is used."

There are cases, of course, in which the landlord sells the demesne to the Estates Commissioners and buys it back, and in that case it is reasonable that the inspector should make a report upon it; but in the majority of cases the landlord retains the demesne for his own use. It is left out of the sale, and the Estates Commissioners have no power to enter into the demesne in any way whatever. Yet this provision applies to every sale, and the time of the inspectors is therefore wasted. In another paragraph the inspectors are called upon to—

> "Describe any timber that may be growing on the estate and report on the sporting rights and value thereof, and advise the Commissioners how in his (the inspector's) opinion such timber and sporting rights should be dealt with."

The timber belongs to either the landlord or the tenant, and it is no business of the Commissioners what is done with it. Sporting rights in some cases are reserved to the Commission, but in very few. In the vast majority of cases they are either reserved to the landlord or transferred to the tenant. It is part of the bargain that takes place, and it is no concern whatever of the Estates Commissioners what happens to those sporting rights.

Again, in Paragraph 6 of the regulations there is this instruction—

> "The inspector should also state whether he considers the agreed price inequitable."

Section 5 of the Act gives the Estates Commissioners power to make such inquiries when the price falls outside the zones, but inside the zones they have no concern with the price whatever. Yet this paragraph clearly applies to all cases. The report when made is valueless. No evidence is taken on oath, the inquiries are entirely at haphazard, no notice is given to the parties, and there is no guarantee that landlord's and tenant's improvements will be properly apportioned, and therefore the time of the inspectors is being in this way also unnecessarily wasted. Form E at the end indicates that the inspectors really have to go through the whole process of what is known as fixing a judicial rent. Their report has to be quite as detailed and quite as important as in our old friend the Pink Schedule. This is not his business, nor the business of his chiefs, who are solely concerned with land purchase, and is waste of time, for in the majority of cases a judicial rent will already have been fixed by the Land Commission. The inspectors under the Land Commission are the most hardworking civil servants in Ireland, if not in the United Kingdom; but it seems to me that by the action of their chiefs their time is being wasted, and this waste of time is retarding the progress of the Act.

The position is really one of vastly increasing anxiety. Agreements are being signed more and more, but there is less money being distributed, and the whole policy of land purchase is being retarded. The Act of 1903 was, I I believe, one of the best measures ever passed for Ireland. It was designed to cut out the canker of dual ownership which had sunk deep down in the whole of Irish agricultural life, and it is only because there is a feeling of the very gravest anxiety prevailing on the subject that I have ventured to bring the question forward, in the hope that His Majesty's Government may be able to announce some real and urgent amelioration of the position in Ireland.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House papers respecting the provision and distribution of the funds required for the carrying out of the purposes of the Irish Land Act, 1903."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

*LORD CASTLETOWN: My Lords, I venture to rise before others speak on this question, because I am not going to deal with the points brought forward by my noble friend opposite from the landlords' point of view. I think he has dealt with that side of the question very exhaustively. I am going to take the point of view of an Irishman living in Ireland, and desirous to go on living in comfort and peace in that country; and I will also deal with the subject from the tenants' point of view.

This is not the first time that I have called your Lordships' attention to the question of land purchase. Twenty-four years ago I tried to induce the Government to embark on a large scheme of purchase, and I cannot help thinking that, if some of the suggestions that were made by those who were working with me at that time had been adopted, we should have been able to carry through by now a much larger and more successful scheme of purchase than is the case. I have often endeavoured to point out that this is not really a landlords' and tenants' question alone. It is not a local question. It is a great Imperial question which can be settled only on Imperial lines, as has been the case in Prussia, in Schleswig-Holstein, partly in Hungary, and even in Russia. In these countries the question has been worked out to a very successful issue by an arrangement of land banks. If the policy of land settlement can be carried out successfully in those countries, it is surely possible in this country to carry out a similar policy, especially as in those countries the Treasury has not in any way suffered from any drain upon it. The whole system is carried out by the issue of land bonds to the proprietors.

We are always told in the course of these discussions that the great difficulty is the danger of some loss to the Treasury. I read the other day the reply given to Mr. William O'Brien in the House of Commons on this subject. It was most satisfactory. It was to the effect that in the payments now being made by the tenant purchasers there had been very little default. To show the magnitude of the question I might inform your Lordships that applications for advances for land purchase under the Irish Land Act, 1903, have been lodged up to 30th April last for £60,890,000, representing 6,482 estates. About one-third of that number, representing a sum of about £23,000,000, have been paid to vendors or lodged in the Bank of Ireland pending ascertainment of incumbrances, etc. Since April, a further number of estates have been lodged, and the purchase money of applications undisposed of amounts to about £42,000,000. Against this there will be about £4,500,000 available for purchase money out of the recent issue of stock. The amount, therefore, of pending cases will still amount to very nearly £40,000,000 before November.

My noble friend opposite, speaking from the landlords' point of view, said the present state of things constituted a very great hardship. I think the hardship is very much greater in many cases on the tenant purchasers, owing to the postponement of the period when they commence to pay off the sinking fund. The great difficulty at present in Ireland is the feeling of uncertainty and the sense of unrest which now permeate the whole country. This state of feeling is unnecessary, in my opinion, because it could be dealt with in the way I have suggested. It is not a question only for Treasury brains to consider how we can get out of this *impasse*. Neither is it a question ot losing money on the Development Grant, which we are doing every year, or of paying out of the local rates. It is a question for the whole country. The ultimate security which is pledged is the credit of England, Ireland, and Scotland.

I believe I am speaking for a large number of Irishmen when I say that we should be perfectly prepared, if it was found necessary, to pay from our local rates if there is a default under the present system. But we would only pay if we found that there was continuity in the purchase policy, and if the scheme as outlined in 1903 was carried out rapidly and vigorously. But we should certainly be entitled to ask that the money we may have to pay should not be frittered away because the Treasury chooses to make issues at a lower rate than is necessary. I am credibly informed that the Treasury could obtain all the money they want if they would take the advice of some of the big financiers in the city. Yet we are always told it is impossible to do this because we must carry on the old strict Treasury plan. Nearly every other country in the world is working on other lines in carrying on land purchase, and they are doing so in a fair and equitable manner and with rapidity. They have adopted progressive methods, and absolutely sound methods also. Therefore I would appeal to His Majesty's Government to examine this question exhaustively. I think it would be advisable, however, to go slowly, but four million or five million pounds a year is too slow a rate.

To show how serious the condition of the country is, owing to the difficulty in carrying out land purchase, I would like to give your Lordships three illustrations. But let me explain before quoting those examples that the reason for the difference in the three districts is that in some parts the Act has worked quickly, in others slowly, and in others in a faulty way. After the passage of the 1903 Act, men waited to see how it would work, and, as we know, it worked well and rapidly for a certain time. Now they are beginning to see that the promises then made are being either forgotten or misconstrued, and there is a feeling of uncertainty.

In the three cases which I shall quote, your Lordships will see how clear this feeling comes out. In Wexford nearly seven-eighths of the county have been sold, and there the men are working quietly at their agricultural work, a certain number of the smaller towns are becoming very full of industrial progress, and there is a general feeling of security throughout the whole district. Then I come to another district—the county of Cork. In Cork five or six very large parishes have been sold. The result is that those districts are quieter, so I am informed by the parish priests, than they have ever been before, and the people are more contented. One of the parish priests said to me—

> "We can now turn our attention from other matters, and work together for industrial progress and social development."

Then I come to the third district, which is a peculiar one, and shows, I think, very clearly the difficulty we have to deal with. In a district in Leinster a very large portion of the land has been sold to the tenant purchasers. It is an agricultural district where there are some large grazing ranches. These were agreed to be sold to the Estates Commissioners two or three years ago, but, unluckily, the money ran short and the negotiations fell through. The result is that, though the tenant purchasers are remaining perfectly quiet, all the rest of the district is in a state of very serious turmoil, and simply because the agreements arranged with the Estates Commissioners cannot be carried forward for want of money.

To show your Lordships how serious the state of affairs in this district is, I would quote from a sermon delivered by the Catholic Bishop of Ossory to his parishioners. He said—

> "He did not learn until a few days ago that a considerable share of commotion and disturbance had arisen in the parish of Rathdowney. He did not know what led to that commotion and disturbance; he could not speak on it, and did not like to venture to offer any opinion. He would not, therefore, go into the question, nor would he attempt to apportion the blame either on the one side or the other. He regretted it very much, as up to this the quiet and peaceful inhabitants of the parish lived in perfect concord not only with those of their own religion, but those who differed from them in religion. He regretted exceedingly that anything should crop up to precipitate those good feelings and kindly relations. He hoped that on both sides there would be reasonable forbearance, and that nothing would be done to create angry feelings that might develop into something worse. He called upon all sides—at least he had a right to call upon his own people—to excercise great self-control, and to exercise a considerable degree of patience; to restrain those that would be prompted to do rash and foolish acts."

Those words show how seriously the Bishop of Ossory regarded the state of affairs in that district. They also show how anxious the clergy are to prevent a recurrence of such acts. But they are unable to do so if the settlement of the land question in those particular districts is not proceeded with, and that cannot be done unless the money is forthcoming with which to do it. That is a very simple answer to the whole problem.

The people who suffer most are not the landlords of Ireland. A great number of the landlords are able to look after themselves. Those who suffer are the poorer people—the farmers who have purchased and those who are about to purchase. I should like to make clear these points, that is—how the farmers and the general public suffer owing to the delay from land purchase. I will take three examples as explaining my meaning. First, the county and district of Wexford where upwards of seven-eighths of the land has been sold to the farmers. Secondly, the district in Cork, in which between seven or eight parishes have been sold under the Land Purchase Acts. Thirdly, the district in Queen's County, where a large section of the land has been sold, but where there are a few unsold farms held by large grazing tenants. Now, in Wexford, where the land has been mainly sold to the people, there is no disturbance, no extra police, and therefore no strain on the resources of the people. Why is this? Simply because the land has been sold and the people are working at industries, social improvements, and other matters connected with their daily life. In the county of Cork the same state of affairs obtains, and one of the most eminent priests in that district informed me he had never known the country so peaceful, and, as he put it, "everyone is busy looking after their own affairs and the social amelioration of the country." Why is that? Simply because, as I say, the land has been sold, and the people's minds are at rest on this subject. Take the third district I have quoted. There are those who might say: "Why is this district disturbed when so much has been sold?" The reason is a very simple one. A large portion within the district was in the shape of grazing ranches. The owner or the owners of these farms had agreed to sell to the Commissioners, but at the last moment it was found that no money was forthcoming, and the result was that the agreements could not be carried out. Since then there has been nothing but tumult and serious rioting, and even the bishop of the diocese has been obliged to intervene and urge the people to be patient, and not to continue these demonstrations and riotous proceedings. A very heavy police tax has been incurred in that district, which will rest mainly on the shoulders of those farmers who had already bought their holdings. This, to my mind, is a most unjust and improper state of affairs. The districts in which these disturbances take place are flooded with police. Very high rates are placed on those districts in consequence, and the result is that the poorer classes are mulcted very heavily in respect of a state of things which is really no fault of theirs. Owing to the fact that the Purchase Act is not working as fast as it should—I do not say that that is altogether the fault of the Government—this heavy taxation is unfairly and improperly placed on the people. Speaking on the subject of compensation in cases of cattle-driving, Lord Chief Justice O'Brien said—

> "I would suggest to the Government that something should be done. A respectable farmer appealed to me that I should not levy compensation off his district. It is an anomaly that respectable farmers should be burdened because of the action of wrong-doers."

The remarks of Lord Chief Justice O'Brien apply to the whole of the country, and I am convinced that if the Government, or rather I should say the Treasury, would take the trouble to find out, without any loss to themselves, how the future of the Land Purchase Act could be financed, the turmoil which at present exists would speedily die out, and that if land purchase could go on as it ought to, smoothly and quietly, I believe the country would settle down rapidly to a normal condition.

The promises that were made in the Act of 1903 must be fulfilled, and I would appeal to the noble Earl the Leader of your Lordships' House to try and find some way—I am perfectly certain it can be done—in which the system of land purchase can be accelerated and the Act of 1903 made to work more quickly. I do not ask—and I think noble Lords opposite would be very unwise to ask—for very much larger sums of money to be expended. I think the Act should move gradually and slowly. It has been found in other countries far better that the instalments should be paid, not at one time from a whole section of the country, but that one district should pay the instalments at one period of the year and another district at another period. It is wiser to work on those lines. I would appeal to His Majesty's Government to find a way to accelerate the system of land purchase, and thereby assist us in Ireland to turn our attention to industrial and social questions.

*LORD CLONBROCK: My Lords, as was mentioned by my noble friend on the front bench, I brought much the same matter before the House last year, and endeavoured to point out the exceedingly uncomfortable and serious position in which both tenants and landlords were placed by the delay in administering the Land Purchase Act. I quite agree with my noble friend opposite, Lord Castletown, that this is a serious matter also for the tenants, for they are now paying a considerably higher percentage on the purchase money than their purchase instalments will be eventually. Therefore, it is very hard for them. It is also exceedingly hard for the landlords, who have to meet fixed Government charges, charges on mortgages, and various encumbrances, and to pay high interest while they are receiving only a small amount of interest on the purchase money; and they are unable to pay off those charges, as they naturally would do immediately were they in receipt of cash.

I and the other noble Lords who followed me on that occasion went into what we believed to be the causes of the delay. I do not think I need recapitulate them now. The noble Earl has mentioned most of them. Insufficiency of staff is one, and that Lord Donoughmore has put before your Lordships very clearly. With regard to want of organisation of the staff, of course, this is a matter of which no one can speak positively, except someone thoroughly familiar with the inner working of the office. We can only hope that if any want of organisation existed last year, it has been since remedied, but, whatever has been done, the pace at which the Act has been administered has not only not improved, but is now slower even than it was before, and materially slower than it was in the period immediately following the passing of the Act. We must attribute that, perhaps, to the causes I have mentioned, but the delay has been in some degree due to the instructions which have been issued to the inspectors.

My noble friend went so fully into that matter that I need mention only one point, but it is one which, I think, tends materially to protract negotiations. I mean the instructions given to the inspectors with reference to non-judicial holdings and grass lands. In the case of non-judicial holdings, they are told to estimate what the fair rent is. If a man has been paying the same tent contentedly for twenty-seven years and has never taken advantage of the Land Court to get a fair rent fixed, one may certainly assume that his rent, in his opinion, is not an excessive one, and his opinion ought to be worth a great deal more than that of an inspector who goes down and sees the farm for a day or two. The same with grass lands. In the case of a grass farm, more especially a non-residential grass farm, the tenant would not hold it and pay the rent he does now unless he thought it worth the money, and that rent ought to be taken as a fair measure of the landlord's interest.

But the inspectors are not only told to estimate what a fair rent is. They are further hampered by the conditions that are imposed. They are to consider what possible changes, economic or otherwise, might take place within the next sixty-eight years to reduce the value of the land to the purchaser. It is impossible to conceive how anyone can do that, but it certainly would have the effect of making the inspector very cautious and inducing him to fix a low price for fear it might turn out in after years that he had made a mistake. Again, he has to take into account what the value of the land may be to the Estates Commissioners after the purchase has been completed, what they had better do with it, and whether there are a sufficient number of suitable individuals in the neighbourhood who will buy that land at the price he has fixed. The landlord naturally thinks that the net income which he receives capitalised represents his interest in the holding, and that that is what he ought to receive, irrespective of what might happen fifty years or so hence or what the Estates Commissioners may elect to do with the land. Their intention probably is to divide it among the people in the neighbourhood, in the hope that they will till it and treat it after the most approved methods of husbandry, but this has often turned out a vain hope. I have heard of cases where the purchaser has immediately proceeded either to meadow the land, and sell the hay off it, or let it to a grazier. This has gone so far that I have heard it said that the result of the Act is that the grazier has ten landlords instead of one. The intention, no doubt, is that the inspector should value it according to what it would be worth when tilled. The land is often better suited for pasture than for tillage, and therefore the price fixed upon it is less than the value which, as prime pasture land, it holds in its present state. It may then be said that the landlord has only to refuse to sell the farm; but the Estates Commissioners can virtually exercise compulsion. They can refuse to consider the whole of his property an estate unless he throws in land of this description to them and at their price. Therefore it comes to this, that after a long struggle, either the whole thing falls through, or else the landlord is finally driven to part with his land at an inadequate price fixed at the mere caprice of an inspector, without hearing sworn evidence and without any appeal against his decision.

There are other points calculated materially to retard the carrying out of the provisions of the Act. When I brought this matter before your Lordships' House last year, the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated that the Government were fully aware of the very serious difficulty, and would do their utmost to endeavour to meet it. We can only express the same hope that they will do so now. Various solutions have been put forward. My noble friend has mentioned one taken from the Report of the Departmental Committee. There is another known as Lord Kenmare's or Sir Alexander Henderson's scheme. I do not press the Government to give any opinion upon that scheme to-night. I mention it simply because it has been so very much before the public, and I wish to dispel the idea that it is advocated, as things stand at present, by any large number of landlords. It has never yet been brought before the Landowners' Convention, the only body which can speak for the landlords of Ireland, and, therefore, we cannot express an opinion on the subject. But, as Chairman of the Executive Committee of that Convention, I wish clearly to state—without expressing any opinion upon the scheme—that it cannot be held, as yet, to have the unqualified support of any great number of Irish landlords.

*Lord DENMAN: My Lords, before I plunge into the rather intricate subject we are debating this afternoon I should like, first of all, to thank the noble Earl opposite and his colleagues for consenting to postpone the debate until this evening. We should not have asked him to postpone it without adequate reason, but we are much beholden to him for doing so. All the noble Lords who have taken part in this debate have called attention to the delay in the working of the Land Purchase Act of 1903, and all who have spoken on the question do so with no little authority and with very considerable knowledge of the subject. I think I am right in saying that they have all had long experience of these debates. I remember when the Land Act of 1903 was before this House, and when the noble Earl opposite, Lord Donoughmore, and his friends came over in great strength from Ireland and wrung important concessions, I think I am right in saying more than once, in the division lobby from the late Government, which was then led in this House by the late Duke of Devonshire; and for that achievement I must say I have respected him ever since.

In those days I never dreamed that I should be implicated in these debates, and I did not follow the subject with any very close attention. But I remember that in those days the prevailing spirit of the debate was one of optimism. To-day, I regret to have to say it, the tone of the debate has been one of pessimism. The noble Earl opposite will say, of course, that that is the fault of the Government. The noble Earl, if I may say so quite respectfully, is a good party man. It is his duty to criticise what the Government does, and I am bound to say that he performs his duty very thoroughly and well. But I am bound completely to differ from him on this particular point. The Government are not to blame for what has occurred in regard to the working of the Irish Land Act. The whole root of the matter is that the financial provisions of the Land Act of 1903 were unsound, and that has caused all our present difficulties. You may say it was impossible for Mr. Wyndham or for anybody else to foresee that Government stock and gilt-edged securities would have fallen as they have fallen in the past year. Mr. Wyndham estimated that the average price he would obtain for the issue of his Land Stock was 95, but you cannot get over the fact that the very first issue which Mr. Wyndham or his Government made was at the price of 87; and from that day to this it must be perfectly obvious to anybody who studied carefully the financial provisions of the Act that sooner or later a deadlock must be arrived at.

It is not correct to say, although there is a general impression, I believe, in the country to that effect, that the Act so far has failed. That is not the case. Up till a short time ago when we went to the City for a new issue of stock, we had issued something over £28,000,000 in stock, realising £25,000,000 in cash; and when you come to think that at the end of the present financial year we shall have paid off rather more than £40,000,000 of debt and have remitted taxation, and in something over four years have made these enormous cash payments of about £25,000,000 as well, I think that is no small financial achievement for this country to have performed.

The noble Earl has dealt in some detail with the administration of the Act, and I am bound to say that, somehow or other, he has contrived to get hold of rather extraordinary notions as to how the Act has been worked during the past twelve months. One of his questions, I think, was why are you going slower this year than you have done in previous years? The answer to that, roughly speaking, is that we are not going slower than we promised to go; we have maintained a steady rate of something like £5,000,000 a year. It has been going on for the past few years. The actual sum during the year ended 31st March, 1908, was £4,950,000. That is very little short of £5,000,000, the rate at which I stated last year advances would be made. I am afraid there is an impression in Ireland that the Estates Commissioners are rather neglecting the interests of the direct sales and are devoting more time and more money to the sales under Sections 6, 7, and 8 of the Land Act.

THE EARL OF MAYO: There is that impression.

*LORD DENMAN: Perhaps noble Lords will permit me to give a few figures on this point. In the year ended 31st March, 1906, the amount paid out with regard to direct sales was £3,888,000 odd. That really was a time for which the present Government, although they were in office, were not responsible. It was for bargains that were filed in the Estates Commissioners' office during the previous autumn and summer. For practical purposes I will take that as the last year of the administration of the Act under the late Government, when Mr. Walter Long was Chief Secretary. Now I come to the year ended 31st March, 1907. The sum in respect of direct sales paid out in that year was £4,300,000 approximately, and last year it was £3,988,000. Therefore it will be seen that we have kept up a steady rate of payment in direct sales, at a rather higher rate than in the last year for which the late Government were responsible. In the year up to the end of March, 1906, the percentage was 77·5 of direct sales; in the next year ended March, 1907, the percentage of direct sales was 83·9, and in the last year ended March, 1908, the percentage was 84·5 per cent. of direct sales. I hope the figures I have given your Lordships will meet that point.

Then I think the noble Earl raised the question of inspectors. He seemed to be under the impression that there were not sufficient inspectors to deal with the cases of direct sales, but their number has been increased from ten in December, 1905, to fifteen in June, 1907; and with regard to the point that, I think, was made, that the Estates Commissioners have been paying too much attention to the question of evicted tenants at the expense of other classes of sales, I can only say that a considerable number—I have not the actual figure here—of inspectors are being especially employed for the purposes of the Evicted Tenants Act, and are not allowed to interfere in any way with the working of the provisions of the Land Act of 1903. Also I am informed that the noble Earl is not correct when he says that under their instructions the inspectors have to inquire into demesnes not being sold, or into sporting rights not being sold, or that they have to fix fair rents where not already fixed.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I said they went through the process of fixing fair rents.

*LORD DENMAN: Then I will not press that point. On the other two I am told that the statement of the noble Earl is not correct.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: Has there been an amendment of the instructions to the inspectors?

*LORD DENMAN: So far as I know, there has not. I should have thought that the mere fact that we had recently gone to the City to raise a loan of £5,000,000 for the purposes of the Act would have been evidence that the purchase provisions will certainly not be delayed. My noble friend behind me touched on the point of the raising of that loan, and that was also referred to on Monday in your Lordships' House by the noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn. We have been criticised for issuing the loan at so low a figure. I can only say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer took the best expert financial advice it was possible for him to get, and that that advice, taken separately from different sources, was unanimously to the effect that the figure at which the loan was issued was the proper figure. The noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn, with, I may say, a rather fine disregard of the advice of the expert financiers, said that he always was in the habit of issuing stock at a ½ per cent.——

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: I said I considered that their advice was apt to be over cautious, and that I was in the habit of asking something more than they had recommended me to ask; but I did not say as much as ½ per cent.

*LORD DENMAN: Possibly when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has had the great experience that the noble Viscount has had in the matter of raising loans, he will be able to follow the noble Viscount's example in that matter. As it was, I submit that he could not do more than take the best financial advice the Government could obtain and act upon it. Then the noble Earl desired information as to the pace at which we were going forward in finding advances for the purposes of the statute. In answer to that I may say that it will certainly be not less than the £5,000,000, unless some entirely untoward event should occur; and I may mention that the Treasury are now considering whether they can sanction some increase in the staff, which, of course, would entail a corresponding increase in the amount of advances made.

I will turn from the administration of the Act to the difficulties ahead. The noble Earl has alluded to the block of some £40,000,000—it is well over £40,000,000, I regret to say, at present—waiting in the office of the Estates Commissioners. That, of course, is a most undesirable state of things. The next difficulty is the question of excess stock. I dealt very fully with that point last year, and I do not wish to repeat what I then said. Of course, it is a very important point how long the Development Grant will last, and how long it will be before the Irish ratepayers are called upon to meet the charge on the excess stock. Then there is the question, which the noble Earl touched upon, of the revision of the bonus, and the point mentioned in the Report of the Departmental Committee, whether or not the bonus eventually may not have to be decreased. That is, of course, rather a question for the future. The immediate difficulty which concerns us is the question of excess stock, and that is a matter to which I think the noble Earl opposite did not pay much attention.

Schemes have been brought forward recently in various quarters for removing this difficulty, amongst others. For myself, I am rather glad to know that, because last year when I suggested that members of the party opposite might be good enough to make suggestions on the matter, I was met with a certain amount of good-humoured ridicule. I am glad to see that certain schemes have now been put forward, and naturally the Government welcome such schemes, because, at any rate, they show that people are alive to the difficulties with which we are faced, and are making an honest attempt to grapple with them. A scheme has been put forward, I understand, by the Nationalist Members of Parliament, but, perhaps, it would be rather outside my province to deal with that. Then there is the scheme put forward by a Member of this House, to which Lord Clonbrock alluded, and which is known as Lord Kenmare's scheme. The noble Lord was good enough to give me a rough draft of the scheme, but it was only a rather short memorandum. The Treasury are not able to give any definite answer——

*LORD CLONBROCK: I did not ask for one.

LORD DENMAN: Nor can I make any definite pronouncement on that point. I may, perhaps, say, however, that though it is possible it might afford a solution, I am told that if there were, say, depreciation of securities all round in time of war or in time of panic, or untoward events of that sort, a considerable loss would be involved under this scheme, and that then the Irish ratepayer or the British taxpayer would have to suffer. I do not know if any Member of the House is conversant with the details of that scheme. If so, we should be very glad to hear any observations on that point.

Then the noble Earl asks what we are going to do in the future. That is, of course, a very grave and serious matter. It is at the present time being discussed by the Treasury and by the Government of Ireland, but no definite conclusion has yet been arrived at. I would ask the House to bear in mind the fact that while the Land Act of 1903 was really a bargain, there were four parties to it—the landlord, the tenant, the British taxpayer, and the Irish ratepayer. All these parties have so far kept to their bargain, and it is obvious that if one party to the bargain disclaims his share, then a very serious situation must arise. I was interested to hear from my noble friend behind me that, in his opinion, he thought the Irish ratepayer was prepared to meet a charge for excess stock——

*LORD CASTLETOWN: If continuity of land purchase and sale were kept up.

*LORD DENMAN: I believe that the Government have carefully considered the question of whether or not it would be practicable to come upon the ratepayer of Ireland to meet this charge of excess stock, and I understand, that they do not think it would be possible that any considerable sum should be taken out of the Irish rates. Therefore, in a large degree that eliminates from the bargain the Irish ratepayer. Then I come to the British taxpayer. The British taxpayer provides a bonus up to £12,000,000; he pays about £130,000 a year to provide the working expenses of the Act, and he is likely to have to pay that for a very long time to come. This charge is almost certain to increase rather than to diminish. I was rather surprised to hear the noble Earl contend that the British taxpayer had not kept to his part of the bargain. I understood that to be the contention of the noble Earl.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I do not think I put it quite so high as that. My point was that the British taxpayer will not carry out his bargain unless he produces this money.

*LORD DENMAN: But the British taxpayer is continuing to provide this money. I speak as a British taxpayer.

THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I should like to speak as an Irish taxpayer, and to say——[The noble Earl was greeted with cries of "Order," and resumed his seat.]

*LORD DENMAN: I must say it does seem to me, when the British taxpayer goes on year after year cheerfully paying this money, that to imply that he is not keeping his part of the bargain savours rather of ingratitude on the part of noble Lords from Ireland. With regard to the taxpayer, the question the Government have to consider is this, whether they are prepared to ask the British taxpayer for a further contribution, and the answer to that, I understand, is that they are not prepared to do so. Then if you eliminate the ratepayer and the taxpayer, there are the landlord and the tenant left, and it is perfectly evident there will have to be a readjustment of the existing terms of the contract so far as these two parties to the bargain are concerned; and I think it is equally evident that what arrangement is come to must be come to by agreement. It is obvious that if either the landlords or the tenants refuse to take advantage of the provisions of the Act, the efficiency of the Act must be very seriously impaired. It had been in my mind to revert to a suggestion made in the Report of the Departmental Committee, that in certain circumstances landlords should be induced, if it were possible, to take stock in lieu of cash; but any observations on that suggestion were rather ruled out beforehand by what was said by the noble Earl opposite, that he could not conceive any man in his senses accepting it.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I said stock with a limit of ninety-two.

*LORD DENMAN: I will not dwell further on that point. I may be told that what I have said in this debate is not satisfactory to the landlord party, and equally the Government may be told that it is not regarded with much satisfaction in other quarters; but I ask the House to remember that this is not the only sum that we are likely to be asked for, on behalf of Ireland, and that within a short time. The Irish Universities Bill will entail a considerable amount of expenditure, and if, as is possible, the Government adopt any of the suggestions of the Commission presided over by Lord Dudley, to inquire into the question of congested districts and so forth, that again must cost another large sum. Therefore, speaking on behalf of the British taxpayer, I have to say emphatically and decidedly that the Government are of opinion that he cannot be expected to undertake any further burden than that which the Act already imposes upon him.

It is very easy to say that this is merely a question of money. It is easy to say: Are you going to risk the success of the Irish Land Act for a mere question of money; and, as has been said, I think, outside the House: Are you going to spoil the ship for a hap'orth of tar? I have noticed that people generally, speaking on this question of the Land Act, treat large sums of money in a light and airy way. The sums are so enormous that one comes to speak of millions and half millions as things of no account at all. People say, Surely you do not mean to imperil the working of this Act for a beggarly quarter of a million a year? or something of that kind. The Government have to consider where this is to end. If we go on finding further sums, how do we know that we shall not be asked for still further sums, or that we may not be involving our successors, it may be generations ahead, in similar financial difficulties to these which we are discussing to-day?

It is easy to say that this is merely a question of staff and of money, but nearly everything in this world, when you come to look at it, is a question of money. Almost every problem in the political arena to-day is a question of money. Take education, licensing, small holdings, any question you like to mention—if you had unlimited money, you could probably find an easy solution to any of them. But what we want to know is how we are to surmount the difficulty which confronts us at present with the means at our disposal. That is all I have to say. In conclusion I would only add that, although, perhaps, I have dealt very inadequately with many of the points raised in this debate, I hope I have said enough to show that the Government are keenly alive to the magnitude and the importance of this question, and that they will give their earnest attention to any scheme, preferably within the limitations I have outlined, for a solution of this very grave and serious problem.

*THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN: My Lords, into the question of the actual working of the Estates Commissioners' Office I do not propose to go. My noble friend Lord Donoughmore has already spoken sufficiently about that. I do not think there can be the slightest doubt that there is a great and unnecessary waste, both of time and money in that office, through examining into many matters of detail in connection with which examination is not necessary. To quote my personal experience, I sold my demesne and obtained an advance upon it, but a great delay took place in getting the advance because the security was too good. They objected to make the advance until they had surveyed and mapped off sufficient of the land as was considered adequate security for the money advanced. I do not blame the Estates Commissioners for that; I think they were obliged to do it in accordance with some legal requirement. But this transaction caused a delay of some two or three months.

I think it is admitted that the root of the problem is the want of money. My noble friend Lord Donoughmore told your Lordships an anecdote to the effect that an official in the office of the Estates Commissioners was challenged to point out a case where the estate was ready for the money and the money was not forthcoming. I dare say that might be so, but it strikes me very forcibly that it may also be the case that the estate is never allowed to be ready until the money is there to be paid, which is quite another thing. It does not appear to me that there ought to be an insuperable difficulty in obtaining the funds necessary to finance the Act, at any rate better than it has been financed.

The issue of £5,000,000 of stock made a few days ago has been mentioned. It obviously was issued at too low a price. The Chancellor of the Exchequer fixed it, no doubt, at the price he was advised to fix it at, but as a matter of fact, it was issued too cheaply. If the financial papers may be relied upon, you were offered, not the £5,000,000 you required, but the sum of £175,000,000, which is enough to buy the whole of Ireland and a great many English counties as well. The amount that was deposited amounted to £8,000,000, £3,000,000, more than you required. It is obvious that there would not have been the slightest difficulty in raising £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 on terms much less favourable to the Stock Exchange. It is mentioned in the Report of Lord Dudley's Commission that the Commissioners could use £10,000,000 a year, and Mr. Commissioner Finucane placed the figure at £15,000,000 a year. I should like to see instructions issued to the Estates Commissioners that they could have £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 this year and another £10,000,000 in the following year, and that they were to proceed as quickly as they could. I am sure that would result in a great acceleration of business. I believe that if the Estate Commissioners were properly staffed and knew they could have the money when it was wanted, the business would go through much faster.

What really is the situation? A little while ago £40,000,000 were required to satisfy pending agreements. I suppose it is more now. That is to say, the State is in arrears to the amount of £40,000,000. We are all pretty well accustomed to arrears in Ireland, and I think that question has been dealt with in almost every Land Bill. I am all in favour of Governments and Government Departments identifying themselves as much as they can with Irish manners and customs; but I do protest against their following them so far as to incur this large amount of arrears, reaching to over £40,000,000.

It is, I think, agreed by everybody that the pending agreements must be satisfied on the terms on which the agreements were made. That is one part of the question. Besides that, there will be another £60,000,000 or so required for the future. I do not myself at all agree to the last estimate of the total amount required—£170,000,000. We will assume that £40,000,000 are required to satisfy existing agreements, and that another £60,000,000 will be required in the future. We have nothing to go upon except the Report of the Departmental Committee which has been alluded to—a Report which is absolutely inadequate, and which, of necessity, had to be inadequate considering that the terms of the reference were that no further demand was to be made on the Exchequer. It was, therefore, impossible for the Departmental Committee to make any suggestions of a practical value. The one important thing in that Report was that the Committee assumed—and it must be remembered that it was presided over by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury—that the National Debt Commissioners would be able to find cash at the rate of £4,000,000 a year. That is a very important admission, because upon that fact a great deal may possibly be founded.

A great many suggestions have been made by the Committee of the Irish Parliamentary Party, by the Landlords Convention, and by various private individuals, myself among them; but into those matters I do not propose to go. No doubt His Majesty's Government will consider all those suggestions and proposals. My noble friend opposite, Lord Denman, has said that the financial provisions of the Act of 1903 are faulty. That, I suppose, means that they will have to be amended, and that some day or other an amending Bill will be brought in to deal with those matters. If that is so, I hope it will be brought in without any possible delay. I think there is a good deal that requires amendment in that Act. I would like to point out one or two matters which I hope will not be included in the amending Bill, and one or two which I hope will be included. In the first place I disagree with my noble friend Lord Castletown, and sincerely hope that losses on flotation will not be put as a charge against the rates in Ireland. Your Lordships will remember that in the Act which created county councils those authorities were restricted in the rate they could levy. They cannot levy a rate more than, I think it is 10 per cent. above the average rate of the five years preceding the Act creating them. If you are going to put these losses upon them, what are they to do? You are going to compel them to raise an illegal rate. I should be very sorry to be the chairman or a member of the finance committee of a county council which did anything of that kind, because they would all be liable to surcharge. I do not think that point need be laboured. I think it is almost universally agreed that it would be absolutely absurd to place these losses of flotation on the rates. You would be simply making bankrupts of the county councils, and ruining the very men who had purchased under the Act and on whom you depend for the punctual payment of the annuities.

There is another thing that should not be done. There cannot by any possibility, I hope, be any suggestion for making any change in the annuity rate. The purchasing tenants pay interest at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. and $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sinking fund—$3\frac{1}{4}$ in all. To my mind it would be absolutely fatal to bring in any legislation that would compel a change in the rate of annuity. I should be very sorry also to see any change made in the period for the liquidation of the loan, but I admit that an extension of the period would not be such an important and formidable matter as a change in the annuity rate. In the course of a few years you would have one set of men paying $3\frac{1}{4}$ and another set paying $3\frac{5}{8}$ per cent., and nothing would possibly satisfy them that they were being fairly treated.

Again, there ought to be no possible suspension of the Act. These forty millions of arrears have to be dealt with first, of course; but if legislation is brought in for amending the financial provisions of the Act I sincerely hope it will be brought in without any great delay in order that the whole process and sale and purchase may go on continuously. It would be a fatal thing if there was an absolute break, and if the Act was suspended for a certain time. I trust that the main principles that were agreed to at the Land Conference will be maintained. One of the most important of those was that cash should be made the basis, and I sincerely hope that cash may continue to be the basis. It is quite possible that some further high-class desirable securities such as Government promissory notes, redeemable at short periods, stand so high that they would never vary; but any stock that is liable to fluctuation would, to my mind, be absolutely fatal. It would lead to a continual wrangle between landlord and tenant as to the price. As it is, a sort of general price has been fixed and is recognised. If you give stock which varies at all considerably, it is obvious that the landlord would ask more years purchase when the stock was low, and would be justified in doing so; and if it was high the tenant would want fewer years purchase, and would be justified in his demand also.

I find it exceedingly difficult to understand the great reluctance that there is to call this Guaranteed Land Stock what it really is—Consols. The only real difference between Guaranteed Land Stock and Consols is that these Irish grants in aid of local taxation as security stand before the Consolidated Fund, but I think all parties are agreed that the losses on flotation ought not to fall upon the rates; that security ought to be taken out, and if it is taken out there is no difference at all. Consols are

National Debt and Guaranteed Land Stock is not called National Debt; but the security in both cases is the same. The difference is merely nominal, the sort of difference that would exist if one of your Lordships put his name at the bottom of a bill or at the back of it. The liability is the same. It is a distinction without a difference. But there is this enormous difference to Ireland, that owing to its being called Guaranteed Land Stock it always has been, and I suppose always will be, at least eight or nine points below its true value. If Consols stand at 100, this stock ought to be 110. To put the matter at the very worst, supposing money cannot be obtained on any better terms than it has been obtained in the past, it is calculated that the loss on flotation would be £700,000 a year.

I quite agree with Lord Denman that it is all very fine talking in an airy way about millions. The sum of £700,000 is a good deal. On the other side, it has to be remembered that Ireland did not get a proper equivalent grant under the Education Act of 1902. She is owed £400,000 a year, and that has been running for several years. That is a matter that surely ought to be considered. And it must not be forgotten that, whenever this transfer of land is completed, you will save the Land Commission and the Land Judges Court—about another £400,000 a year. Then the Council Bill did not go through, and the Treasury was saved £650,000 a year. That makes, altogether, about £1,500,000, against the £700,000 a year which would be the most that would have to be found if the whole cost of the losses on flotation were satisfied by the taxpayer.

Moreover, we have been paying off the National Debt at a marvellous rate—a very good thing to do. We have paid off £40,000,000 in the last three years. I am not quite certain myself that this is the soundest kind of finance if at the same time we are not satisfying our current commitments. I know what it would be in the case of a private individual. If I were to lay by money to pay my grandfather's debts it would be wise; but if, at the same time, I refused on that ground to pay my tradesmen's current bills, I have no doubt the Courts would say my methods of finance were faulty. I do not think it is sound to pay off the National Debt in that way and not to find the money which I submit Parliament is in equity bound to find to finance the Act of 1903. It would be almost insulting to Parliament, and to the whole system of constitutional government, not to admit that, in passing a great Act like that of 1903, Parliament practically bound itself to make that Act operative. It was a very unusual Act and was based upon unusual circumstances. First came the Land Conference of 1901, in which the two parties came to an agreement as to fair means and methods whereby the odious system of dual ownership should be done away with. That treaty was ratified by every public body in Ireland, practically by the whole Irish people. Upon that treaty the Act of 1903 was founded, and that Act passed through both Houses of Parliament with the acclamation of all parties. It is unusual that such an agreement as that should be the foundation of an Act of Parliament, and I do not think it can be argued that in passing an Act of that kind for the definite purpose of putting an end to dual ownership in Ireland and giving peace to the country, Parliament did not bind itself to see that it should be carried out.

I maintain that the landlords and the tenants have fulfilled their part of the contract, and, unless sufficient money is found to finance the Act, the State will not be fulfilling its part of the contract. What I am afraid of is that the Government have not realised the gravity of the situation and do not understand how serious would be the disaster were the Act to become a failure. The success of the Act depends upon the punctual payment of annuities. Annuities have been paid with marvellous punctuality. Are you setting the people a good example? They must pay their annuities in good times and bad times, under any circumstances. That is their part of the bargain, and they fulfil it. It is not wise of the State to say "we will not fulfil our part of the contract, not because it is impossible—that is absurd: but simply because it is inconvenient." Hopes have been raised among the Irish people that it would be cruel and unwise to disappoint. There are many lamentable incidents in the history of Ireland, but it would not be easy to find any incident more lamentable than this great and beneficient Act of appeasement and content should be allowed, for the sake of a little money, to become an element of discord instead of an element of peace.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I am sure I shall not be contradicted when I say that the noble Earl behind me had every right to bring before Parliament the present congested state of affairs with regard to the purchase provisions of the Act of 1903. With my noble friend Lord Dunraven, I would urge His Majesty's Government to make a serious attempt to realise how important the situation in Ireland is, as well as the great inconvenience and discomfort which prevail among all the classes who are in any way associated with the administration of the Act, owing to the present block in the Land Commission Court.

Lord Denman informed us that the Government were fully aware of this, and were giving the matter their best attention. But, as a matter of fact, this congested state of the land purchase business is not new. My noble friend Lord Clonbrock called attention to it last year, though the position now is much worse than it was then. Noble Lords opposite assured us at that time that they would give the matter their best consideration, but the accumulations have increased from £33,000,000 last year to £41,500,000 at the present time, while £40,000,000 have been applied for during the year, and only £5,000,000 have been distributed. There is, therefore, a material increase in the block, and unless something is done we may anticipate a still greater increase as years go on.

It is well that we should consider what is the reason of this very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I think it may be said, with perfect truth, that the great Act of 1903 has exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine; but if it is to be eventually and thoroughly successful, it can only be through the policy being cordially taken up by the people and through its satisfactory administration.

What is the reason of the congestion? I understand that no fault can be found with the Treasury. The Treasury have, it is said, advanced money whenever application has been made. To a certain extent, the block is due to the delay caused by the proving of titles, though I am informed that even where the title has been cleared the money has not been forthcoming, because the inspection of the land has not been carried out.

I would press His Majesty's Government to say why the cost of proving title has been increased by the regulations of the Commissioners. If His Majesty's Government will look at the Act of 1903, Section 24, subsection (9) they will find that it explicitly enacts that the Land Commission should cause their officers to make such investigations and to perform such other duties as may be requisite and proper for the purpose of ascertaining titles and distributing the purchase money; and it is also provided that such ascertainment and distribution shall, to such extent as may be sanctioned by the Treasury, be made without charge to the person entitled to the money. Yet, notwithstanding that, a serious change has been made by the Estates Commissioners in their new statutory rules, and they have directed that *prima facie* evidence of the vendor's right to sell shall be given by the lodgment of a certificate signed by counsel. Vendors will, therefore, have these very heavy costs to pay which the Act intended should be borne by the Land Commission. I ask His Majesty's Government to explain why this additional burden has been imposed on landlords, and if it is due to the Treasury having refused to give the sanction mentioned, can the Government state the ground of their refusal, and will they do anything to get the Treasury to give the necessary sanction?

I have heard that the block has also been caused in some respects by the delay in the inspection of estates. This is borne out by a statement of the Chief Secretary, who said, on May 21st, that the delay did not occur in the Examiners' office, or in the distribution of the money, but in the inspection of the estates and in the preliminary survey which was carried out with an insufficient staff. Why is the staff insufficient? I understood from

Lord Denman that the Government have some idea of increasing the staff. I hope that is the case. Otherwise we should like to ask why the staff, as acknowledged by the Chief Secretary, is insufficient. My own opinion is that the attention of the staff is engaged on minor and subsidiary branches of land purchase. Their time has been occupied in the reinstatement of evicted tenants, in the enlargement of holdings, and in providing parcels of land for what are called landless men; but their primary duty, I maintain, is to administer the Act and endeavour to promote the transfer of land under it.

I remember Mr. Wyndham making a great point when he said—

> "In using the powers of this Bill for settling the Irish land question, they ought not to single out one class for preferential treatment to the detriment of others."

I think that in dealing with these subsidiary matters the Commissioners are treating unjustly those who were to benefit under that Act. The block might be largely got rid of by creating a temporary Commissioner to undertake these subsidiary duties, leaving the Commissioners free to carry out the original duties they were intended to perform. I have noticed in the debates that have taken place in the other House that the Nationalist Party have laid greater stress on the reinstatement of the evicted tenants than on the transfer of the land under the provisions of the Act. They seem to complain that the evicted tenants have not been restored with that rapidity which they had hoped for. The Nationalist Party have made no request for the acceleration of land purchase. Their desire has been, as Mr. Dillon put it, that Mr. Birrell would, as much as possible, speed up the Commissioners on this particular question of the evicted tenants. Consequently, we see that the desire of the Nationalist Party is not to promote purchase, and Mr. Birrell, in his reply, attempted to diminish the complaint by confining his reference as regards the cause of the delay to the restoration of evicted tenants. Therefore we are justified in believing that the Estates Commissioners have considered that it was the desire of their Chief that they should devote themselves to a very great extent to these subsidiary duties instead of to the main duties which the Bill entrusted to them.

Attention has been drawn to the fact that this delay causes great inconvenience and in many cases discomfort to many who had hoped to benefit by the Act. The landlord naturally receives less rent when his agreements have been sgined than he would had his tenants been paying him the usual rents; and, in the case of estates that are mortgaged, the difference between 3½ and 4 per cent. has a serious effect upon his annual income. That is the hard case of the landlord. The tenant has also cause for complaint. He is paying his landlord 3½ per cent. instead of what he would be paying, in all probability 3¼ per cent., besides having the time postponed when he may hope to become the owner of his holding. I think the Imperial taxpayer also has cause to complain of this delay, for if once the block in the administration of the Land Act were removed and the measure carried into effect as was intended, there would be £160,000 or £170,000 a year saved which is now paid in salaries and expenses. In these circumstances I think we are justified in asking His Majesty's Government seriously to consider the situation and to carry out the intentions of the Act of 1903. I believe that if the transfer of land could be effected on the terms intended by that Act, Ireland would be far more contented, and the people far more ready to devote themselves to the industrious development of the country.

*THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I must congratulate the noble Earl, Lord Donoughmore, on having introduced this discussion. I remember very well the part he took in the debates on the Bill of 1903, although, unluckily, I was not present during those proceedings owing to an accident. The noble Earl won his spurs in those debates, and it is fitting that he should deal with this matter on the present occasion. I can recall the passing of the Bill in the House of Commons, and I shall not easily forget the shout of "Aye" from every part of the House which decided its Second Reading; and when I remember that, I cannot understand the statement made by Lord Denman that the financial provisions of the Bill were totally unsound

If they were unsound at that time, why did not the then Opposition object to them? I left the House of Commons on that night feeling that a new era had begun for Ireland, and that we had seen the last of the terrible Act of 1881, an Act passed to meet a state of affairs which, happily, does not exist now, but one which was calculated to ruin any country which has agriculture for its chief industry.

The House of Commons that passed the Act of 1903 has been swept away and almost annihilated, but I have no reason to suppose that the present House of Commons, nor indeed the present Cabinet, are not anxious to carry on the work of administering the latest Irish Land Act. However, there are ways devious and otherwise of administering an Act, especially an Irish Land Act. Before proceeding further I should like to say a word with regard to the observations of Lord Dunraven. The noble Earl, who was chairman of the Land Conference, has dealt very fully with the financial question, and I shall not presume to follow him in regard to that. But I must make one remark with regard to Irish finance. Two men have made Ireland feel their influence on its finances—Mr. Gladstone, who imposed the income-tax on that country, and Mr. George Wyndham, who brought in and passed the Act of 1903. The first swelled the Treasury bag; the second pledged British credit to a large amount, and gave twelve millions as a bonus to sweeten the land market between landlord and tenant in Ireland. If I were taken to task and heckled as to this bonus—we are often told that it was a present to the landlords—I would simply reply that it is a fractional part of the interest due to Ireland, and a fast diminishing one at that, on the imposition of an income-tax which it was never thought was going to be continued. Lord Denman referred to the British taxpayer, and I interrupted him with a reference to the Irish taxpayer. With regard to that question, it must be remembered that the individual Irishman pays exactly the same as the individual Englishman in the matter of taxes. There are very few exceptions.

The Notice which the noble Earl placed on the Paper speaks of the delays in connection with the provision and distribution of the funds. Let me deal for a moment with the Estates Commissioners. I have been through the Estates Commissioners' mill, and know what has to be done. It grinds somewhat slowly. I have sold my estate in County Kildare; the agreements in regard to my Meath estate are in the pigeon holes in the office of the Estates Commissioners; and I have reinstated an evicted tenant who was not an evicted tenant. I can quite understand your Lordships smiling at that expression. He was the son of an evicted tenant, and went to America; he returned, and is now back again on the farm, and I wish him every luck in his undertaking.

It is not my intention to find fault with the Estates Commissioners or to comment on their work. They are Irishmen like myself, and are put there to do a very difficult job. They are badly housed and have not sufficient staff, and they might well be given more money with which to carry on their work. As to the inadequacy of their accommodation, I would read to your Lordships a quotation from the *ad interim* Report of the Estates Commissioners, in which they say—

> "The work of the Estates Commissioners was commenced in No. 12, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin, on Monday, 2nd November, 1903. The office accommodation provided there was found to be insufficient, and other accommodation was provided. . . . Both the staff and the accommodation have already become insufficient for the purpose of enabling the Commissioners to deal rapidly and methodically with the applications for advances that have come before them."

I say frankly that, if clerks were to be housed in this great City as badly as the clerks in the office of the Estates Commissioners are housed in Dublin, I should not be in the least surprised if they were to strike, and rightly so, because it is impossible to do the work, crowded together in the way these officials are. It is admitted that two-thirds of Irish land are mortgaged. The examining and clearing of title require the services of well-instructed men, but you cannot expect young Irish barristers to go into the office and deal with this matter unless they are well paid and properly accommodated. Therefore it is exceedingly difficult to get a proper staff.

As to the question of evicted tenants, there is no doubt that political exigencies have forced the evicted tenants question to the front. The Estate Commissioners have had an increase of staff to deal with this question, but no matter what increase in staff is given the matter has to go before the Estate Commissioners, and therefore it must, so to speak, put sand in the wheel of the purchase machinery. It is impossible to do two things at once. We agree, of course, with the principle of the Evicted Tenants Act, but object to its being worked in front of the Act of 1903.

My noble friend Lord Donoughmore next asks the Government whether they propose to take any steps to secure the effective carrying out of the purchase provisions of that Act. Before dealing with this, I should like to refer to, though I will not quote, the words of Lord Morley in praise of the Bill when it was in the House of Commons. Nothing could be stronger or more statesmanlike than his statement on the Amendment moved by Mr. Coghill to read the Bill a second time that day six months.

There was one point in the speech of Lord Castletown to which I think I ought to refer. I agree with Lord Dunraven that it is preposterous that the ratepayers of Ireland should be called upon to pay any deficiency thrown upon the Development Grant. I cannot imagine such a suggestion. It is quite unthinkable. I know it is in the Act, but it must be remembered it was said that economies were likely to be made—economies with regard to the police, for example, which, under the present Government, have not been realised. Therefore I cannot admit that the ratepayers should have this burden put upon them in any way. The noble Lord who spoke on behalf of the Government seemed to welcome the statement of Lord Castletown on that matter. I deny that Lord Castletown has any right to speak for the ratepayers of Ireland generally, and I am sure that any speech made in a market place in Ireland against payment would be a most popular speech.

Lord Denman referred to the Runciman Report. That document constitutes the only opportunity we have had of seeing what is in the mind of the Treasury at the present moment. I should like to quote to your Lordships the concluding words of a leading article in *The Times* on this Report. *The Times* states—

> "It must be borne in mind, however, that they are the recommendations of a Departmental Committee only, which was bound to approach this wide and complex subject from the standpoint of mere finance."

I think that is an excellent statement. It was only from the standpoint of finance, of course, that the Departmental Committee could possibly have approached it. The whole basis of the Act was a gold basis, and that is the reason why it has been such a success. The publication of the Treasury Report has cast a dark shadow over the whole of those interested in the working of this Act. The British Treasury are not likely to lose any money whatever over the transaction, for the tenant has paid his interest most punctually. Mr Cherry, the Attorney-General, stated in the House of Commons, in answer to Mr. William O'Brien, that the instalments under the 1903 Act were even better paid than those under former Acts. Therefore I cannot see what complaint there can be on that score.

In the first of the series of recommendations the Committee say—

> "We consider that the finance of land purchase should be put on a workable basis as soon as possible, and that it is essential to restrict the operations of the law, as it stands at present, at the earliest possible moment. This object could best be attained by the announcement that after the briefest possible interval all fresh agreements should be subject to arrangements hereafter to be determined by Parliament."

If that were to be enforced, the Act of 1903 would come to an end altogether. The answer to the Runciman Report is the issue of land stock to the amount of £5,000,000; and, therefore, I do not consider that what I may call the wicked and evil recommendations of that Report are likely to be put into force. That is satisfactory. No doubt the noble Lord will take credit for that issue of stock. I am not very much impressed with it. I do not consider that Erin, like Danæ, has been embraced by the Treasury Jove in a shower of gold. I look upon it not as a shower, but as a little mist, such as I have often noticed on the Welsh coast, when crossing over to Ireland. Since the Runciman Report £4,000,000 worth of estates have come into the Estates Commissioners' hands, and this shows that the publication of this Report has made people very anxious to get in their agreements as soon as possible.

We are all agreed upon one point, and that is that the Act must go on. Not only are the landlords and the Unionists of Ireland agreed, but the Nationalist Party as well, for in the Report of a Committee of the Irish Party on Land Purchase Finance, the Committee summarises its conclusion as follows:—

> "(1) The progress of land purchase should be accelerated; money should be provided much more rapidly than is proposed in the Treasury Memorandum; and the staff at the disposal of the Estates Commissioners should be proportionately increased. (2) Losses on flotation of stock issued to provide the cash for advances should not be allowed to fall on the Irish ratepayers, but should be met by an Imperial charge."

That Report was signed by eight Nationalists, headed by Mr. Redmond, the Leader of the Nationalist Party. I may be twitted as to the other conclusions arrived at by the Irish Party. Let me say at once that they are debatable points, and I have no doubt it would be quite possible to exchange opinions on the subject and come to a definite conclusion, and most likely to agreement. We came to a definite conclusion and agreement in the Land Conference, and I have not the least fear that we could do so again. We had a very disagreeable winter last year, and I do not look forward to next winter in Ireland with complacency, unless the working of the land purchase provisions is accelerated.

I do not propose to enter into the question of cattle-driving, but there is a feeling of sulkiness and distrust growing up amongst all classes in Ireland. This great Act was a measure of appeasement, and we are quite prepared to join together and do our best to see it carried out. It is bringing about a great change. Peasant proprietary is an established fact in Ireland. Land is passing from the present landlords to the people, and where that system is set up you have, as Lord Castletown said, peace and quiet, and agitation ceases to be a profitable or an interesting business. The State rent is paid punctually. England stands to lose nothing by the full administration of the 1903 Act. The Irish people—and I speak with some knowledge of my countrymen—believe fully that England will keep her promises, and what the noble Lord has said to-night leads me to believe she will. There is, however, always a "but" in Irish affairs. It is this, that although you may provide sufficient money year by year, it is also necessary to provide sufficient staff for the Estates Commissioners if you place upon them duties such as those dealing with evicted tenants. As I have said, I believe that England will keep her promises, and it is with that feeling in my heart that I have ventured to address your Lordships this evening.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the subject which the House has been discussing this evening is one in which I have taken a close interest for so many years that I am impelled, even at this late hour, to say two or three words with regard to it. I shall not take up the time of the House for many moments, and I shall avoid altogether certain branches of the case. I do not, for example, wish to make reproaches or to answer the reproaches which have been made as to the manner in which the present Government or the late Government have dealt with the Irish agrarian question. It is tempting, perhaps, for one side to tell the other that all this trouble has arisen from the too optimistic financial arrangements which accompanied the Act of 1903, and it is not less tempting to us to do what has been done by one or two noble Lords who have spoken this evening and to impute the blame to the principles upon which the Party opposite have dealt with Irish land legislation.

I desire to avoid all these things, and to consider for one moment only what seems to me really the most important point before us—the gravity of the situation with which we are threatened in Ireland owing to the apparently impending breakdown of Irish land purchase. That breakdown is one which I feel sure noble Lords opposite would contemplate with as much regret as we contemplate it on this side. We are, after all, threatened with the failure of the one successful experiment which we have made in dealing with the Irish problem. The evidence that that breakdown is near at hand seems to me overwhelming. I will not go over the ground again. It has been pointed out to us that the office of the Estates Commissioners is blocked by a huge accumulation of business, and that that accumulation tends to increase and will reach a point which will altogether interrupt the realisation of the high hopes which were formed in 1903. My noble friend beside me told the House that, according to his calculations, if things went on as they are going now landlords and tenants who entered into these purchase agreements might be kept waiting for no less than sixteen years before the transactions would actually be completed.

Just consider what that means. To the tenant the misfortune is not only a financial misfortune; not only has he to pay, as interest, a larger sum than he would pay as purchase annuity, but you prevent him taking the first steps along that road which will eventually lead him to the absolute ownership of his farm. As we all know, the Irish peasant is a sentimental person, and I believe that that sentiment of inchoate ownership is one which has a most extraordinary effect on the mind of these people, and if you tell them that they will have to wait, I do not care if it is six, eight, or sixteen years, before they begin to pay the first instalment of the purchase money, it will lead to a feeling of vexation and disappointment which it is almost impossible to exaggerate.

Of the hardship to the landlord I need not speak at length. He has to be content with a sum less than the interest which he might obtain from the investment of the purchase money; he lies out of his bonus; and in the meanwhile, if his estate is an encumbered one, he is liable for heavy charges upon encumbrances and on account of tithe rent charge, quit rent charge, and other charges of the same kind to which Irish land is liable. There is another class which has not been mentioned this evening, and which suffers acutely under this system. I mean the whole class of agents and solicitors who have this vast amount of heavy business thrown on their hands, and who have, as a rule, to wait for their remuneration until the money is paid. It comes, then, to this, that there is absolute unanimity in Ireland amongst all sections of the community that the breakdown of these arrangements would be a great national misfortune. That is stated with great moderation, but with great effect, in the Report of the Treasury Committee which has been so often quoted this evening.

Two causes have been mentioned as those to which this breakdown has been due. The first is the inadequacy of the staff and the other the inadequacy of the funds at the disposal of the Estates Commissioners. As to the staff, I have not yet come across anyone who really knew what was going on in Ireland with regard to land purchase transactions who was not absolutely convinced that the insufficiency of the staff was one of the most potent causes which has tended to bring about these vexatious delays. I believe that both branches of the Estates Commission stand in need of reinforcement—the department which has to deal with the inspection of estates, and the department of the Judicial Commissioner, which has to do with the examination of title and so forth; and we have the most unequivocal evidence of the Estate Commissioners themselves that this is their opinion.

I wish to express my agreement with what my noble friend Lord Mayo said a moment ago when he told the House that he for one did not desire to make any complaint whatever of the Estate Commissioners and their staff. They have a gigantic work imposed upon them, and they have to get through it with a staff which has been to a large extent improvised. It is not like an old department with long traditions and long habits of transacting business of a special kind; it is new work thrown on a new department, and from time to time—here again I make no reproach—new work of a particularly troublesome character has been thrown upon the department of the Estates Commissioners. I do not desire to discuss the policy of our legislation with regard to evicted tenants, but it cannot do otherwise than involve the minute investigation of very trivial cases, and these minute investigations must interrupt the larger and more important work of the Estates Commissioners. It is also perfectly true, I believe, that owing to the manner in which these departments are housed in Dublin, their business is transacted at a very great disadvantage. I have a very lively recollection of the trouble which was given to the old War Office when its departments were scattered all about the

West End of London—I think in eighteen different buildings; and I have no doubt that the Estates Commissioners have suffered greatly from that cause.

One word only with regard to another point which has been pressed by two or three of my noble friends. I mean the additional impediment thrown on the work of the Commissioners by the regulations issued in the year 1906. I do not for a moment wish to suggest that no regulations were necessary. I think it is quite likely that the experience of the Commissioners may have shown that there were points at which it was desirable to strengthen the hands of the Commission, and I make no complaint that that should have been done. But, again, I have never found anybody who was not convinced that the regulations issued in 1906 were of a needlessly meticulous and minute character. Two or three instances have been mentioned. Why is it necessary to tell your inspectors that they are to project their minds into the future, and form an opinion as to the probable course of agricultural development during the years which lie ahead? Surely, as my noble friend Lord Clonbrock said, if you have a tenant who has paid his rent regularly and contentedly for twenty-seven years, and has not thought it worth while to go into Court, it is *prima facie* evidence that his rent is a reasonable one. I often think that sufficient regard is not paid to the fact that the Government has for its security not only the interest of the landlord, but the additional interest of the tenant, which, as we know, is saleable, often for very large sums indeed, in the open market, and which is certainly an additional protection to those who acquire the fee simple of the land.

The insufficiency of the staff is one difficulty, and I was glad to hear from Lord Denman that His Majesty's Government are disposed to take the matter into consideration, and that they will probably recommend some increase of the present staff. Then I come to the money difficulty; and feeling that I am here skating on extremely thin ice, I shall be careful to avoid committing myself to any definite suggestion as to the manner in which it might best be overcome. But I was very glad to gather from Lord Denman that His Majesty's Government are ready to consider—shall I say in a friendly spirit?—the concrete proposals which I understand have been elaborated by some gentlemen interested in this question, to whom, I think, we owe a debt of gratitude for the part they have taken in endeavouring to find a solution of the difficulty. Of course, we shall find that all the parties concerned are equally unwilling to assume any additional liability; the landlord will not be ready to accept a smaller price for his land. I think my noble friend was right in saying that most of them had put the price down as low as they could, having regard to their own protection. The tenant naturally dislikes having his purchase annuity increased. The Irish ratepayer is apparently averse to incurring new obligations; and then, when we come to the Treasury, the noble Lord who represents that Department, and who is imbued with the Treasury spirit has told us that we are not to look for any assistance whatever from that quarter.

The noble Lord gave us, I thought, some most admirable advice on that point. He protested against noble Lords on this side dealing lightly with vast sums of money; he spoke of the fear His Majesty's Government had of doing anything that might involve their successors; and he suggested that it was desirable that we should adapt our obligations to our financial resources. I think it is not unlikely that when a Bill which is now before this House and the Second Reading of which we shall take on Monday next comes up for discussion we may hear something about the light treatment of vast sums, the danger of involving our successors, and the need of adapting our obligations to our visible resources. But I do not desire to pursue that further.

All I will say upon the money question is this. I trust that His Majesty's Government will not regard this demonstration on the part of my noble friends from Ireland as a mere Irish raid on the British Exchequer. The matter is much more serious than that. I trust it will be approached in the spirit in which a distinguished colleague of the noble Earl opposite to whom my noble friend referred a moment ago, Mr. John Morley as he then was, dealt with it at the time when the Land Purchase

Bill was before the House of Commons. He said—

> "The Bill must be regarded not as conferring a boon on one class or another in Ireland, but as a great act of state and national policy."

And Sir Edward Grey, in the course of the same debate, added that—

> "The Bill is the essential price you will have to pay for bringing about a voluntary arrangement of the Irish land question."

That is the spirit in which, I hope, this question will be dealt with by the Government which is now in power. At any rate, my Lords, I trust that they will look in the face the very serious combination of circumstances which is developing itself in Ireland. Those who know that country best are deeply impressed with the gravity of the present situation. Two or three years ago the country was in a comparatively peaceful condition, and the minds of the agricultural population were turned almost entirely to the question—the most absorbing of all in their eyes—of acquiring the ownership of their farms. At this moment we cannot say that the condition of Ireland is orderly and peaceful. Read the reports which appear week after week of the language used by learned Judges in different parts of Ireland, and you will see that certain portions of the country are at this moment honeycombed with disorder. If on the top of that, at a moment when this agrarian movement is assuming dangerous proportions, you superimpose a breakdown of Irish land purchase, you will create a situation with which the strongest Government will find it difficult to deal. My Lords, His Majesty's Government have shown themselves not wanting in resource and in audacity in dealing with other great public questions. I trust they will display some of those qualities in dealing with the grave problem which my noble friend has brought before your Lordships this evening.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I unfortunately was not in the House when the noble Earl who introduced this matter uttered the first few sentences of his speech, and, therefore, I do not know exactly in what capacity he approached this subject, whether it was as an Irish landlord or as a Member of the front bench opposite. The caution given by the noble Marquess who has just sat down was by no means an unnecessary one when he urged us not to regard this as a great demand of Irish landlords upon the resources of the Treasury. This debate has been treated throughout as if it were simply an Irish one. For one or two moments noble Lords who are not Irish landlords have appeared on the front Opposition Bench, but they have never stayed, and none of them have taken any part in the debate. I am bound to say I think that is not entirely to the credit of your Lordships House. This matter has been treated in speech after speech as simply a question for Irish landlords and Irish tenants, and the great scope of it has in fact been lost sight of altogether.

The noble Marquess who has just sat down said he did not wish to engage in a game of argumentative battledore and shuttlecock as to who might be considered responsible for the unfortunate state of things with regard to the working of this Act. It is perfectly true, no doubt, that the Act of 1903 was in a very large measure passed by consent. A certain danger attaches to measures that are passed in any degree by consent. People are so enthusiastic over the consent that they do not always look so closely as they might into the measure; and I think it cannot be denied that my noble friend behind me was well within the mark when he stated that the financial provisions of that Act had proved to be unsound. Although the measure received general consent, I think if noble Lords opposite will look at the discussion in 1903 they will see that it was pointed out that from our point of view it would have been very much better to have paid landlords from the start in stock and not in cash, in which case this particular kind of difficulty would never have arisen at all.

This debate has, of course, divided itself into two entirely separate subjects, one the official working of the Act in Ireland, and the other the great financial question connected with it. I propose only to say a very few words on the first point. As regards the staff, it is, of course, perfectly true—I do not see how it can possibly be denied—that if you multiply the staff indefinitely you will do the work more quickly; but the staff as it has gone on is the staff as it was devised for the work of that particular Act, and with a view to the operations taking place at a particular rate. Of course, it is open to noble Lords to argue that the staff ought to be increased, but it is only fair to mention that so far as any question of bargain is concerned on this side of the subject, that bargain has been carried out by the maintenance of the staff at the level which I have no doubt Mr. Wyndham contemplated when he was responsible for the passing of the Act. I do not wish to dwell on the question of delay. I can hardly believe it possible that the duties of the Estates Commissioners in connection with the Evicted Tenants Act have had any substantial effect in delaying the work of the Commission. The transactions under that Act have, of course, not been numerous, and, as I say, I find it difficult to believe that whatever effect they may have had in that respect can have been otherwise than something trifling.

It is only fair to mention, on the other side, that a certain degree of delay has taken place in regard to questions of title, and in some cases that delay has extended to a period of a year. The noble Marquess, Lord Londonderry, asked how it was that *prima facie* evidence on the authority of counsel was now asked for in questions of title. I understand that that was declared by Mr. Justice Wyley to be strictly demanded by the terms of the Act, and although I do not know this—I am only speaking now from conjecture—I should imagine that before the rule was enforced there must have been a certain number of cases of time wasted by people coming to Court, and its being found after a time that they had no title in respect of the particular land or other matter which they desired to sell. There have been delays, I know, some of a year's duration on minor matters. I hope—and I believe—it will be found possible, as my noble friend behind me suggested, to make some small increase in the staff with a view to accelerating the working of the Act.

Now I pass to the much larger side of the question—the financial side; and it is necessary, I think, to deal with what has been said as to the terms of the bargain entered into in the year 1903. Both the noble Earl who introduced this matter and Lord Dunraven spoke of this bargain as though it were a bargain to see the working of the Act through with British taxpayers' money, whatever the cost might be. I defy anybody to find a word in any speech made by a responsible person at that time which would lead to that conclusion. The bargain was a perfectly definite one stated in terms of cash. So much money was required, it was said, for the purpose of purchasing Irish land. So many millions of money were to be found by the taxpayer for the purpose of the bonus, and I can hardly imagine that noble Lords opposite are prepared to argue that if, for instance, the bonus should be found inadequate to give the 12 per cent. to every landlord, however many landlords may sell in the course of these transactions, it is an absolute obligation of honour on us to find so many more millions—nobody knows how many—in order to secure that amount of bonus to every landlord. No bargain of that kind was ever made. The terms of the bargain are absolutely explicit. They are to be found in the four corners of the Act, and I do not admit that *qua* bargain, whatever may be said as to the policy of doing this, that, or the other, any further obligation than that expressed in the Act rests on the Government of this country.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The noble Earl agrees.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I think it would be a great pity if you did not maintain it at 12 per cent., but I made no claim for its maintenance at 12 per cent.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I understood the noble Earl to say that we were bound to finance this on the same scale all through.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: I do maintain that, but not the point above the bonus.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Then as regards what the Treasury may do in the future. I have to repeat, what my noble friend said, that His Majesty's Government are not prepared to find any more of the taxpayers' money for the working of this Act. I have also to say, with equal explicitness, that equally they are not prepared to add this charge to the National Debt. That was a point that was dealt with with much ingenuity by the noble Earl, Lord Dunraven. He argued that there was no difference in practice whether a particular stock was called Consols or Irish Land Stock. I think anyone who knows anything of the City would be inclined to dispute that proposition. Consols have a special sanctity of their own which is possessed by no other stock in this country, and, indeed, we are proud to think, by no other stock in the world; and to add at a stroke 150 millions to the National Debt is a proposal which it is better to say frankly we are totally unable to consider.

In passing, I should like to allude to another observation of the noble Earl as to the price at which the last loan was issued. The noble Earl argued that because that loan had been subscribed ever so many times over, that was a proof that it might quite reasonably have been issued at a higher price. There, again, I think the noble Earl was uttering a fallacy. I believe it to be the fact, though I do not pretend to be an expert in such matters, that it is quite possible for a loan to be subscribed a hundred times over, so delicate are the operations of the money market, at a given price, and at a very slightly higher price not to be fully subscribed at all. People know in the City exactly what the value of the stock at a particular price is to them, and they want to get as much as they can, and, therefore, a man sends in for 1,000,000 of the stock well knowing that others will do the same, and that he might have some chance of getting the amount he actually wants. But if he does not like the price, neither he nor the other would send in at all. Therefore, I think it would be very unsafe to build an argument on that particular point.

I have made these two categorical statements, and, therefore, noble Lords opposite may fairly ask, if that is so, whether we see any way out of this difficulty. I am very sorry that the noble Earl who opened the debate, dismissed quite so abruptly as he did the possibility of a considerable number of landlords being willing to take stock instead of cash; but, on the other hand, I was somewhat reassured by knowing that it was in respect of the price of 92 that he dismissed the matter so curtly. As regards that, I have to say that we are not in any way bound by what appears in the Report which has been quoted as to that price of 92. The actual price would, no doubt, have to be a matter for consideration, and I admit also for negotiation, because, more particularly in respect of agreements already entered into, it is perfectly clear that a price must be found which will be satisfactory to the landlords. I hope there may be some way out through that road. The landlord will have to consider whether he would rather take his payment in stock, or supposing he and all landlords insisted on cash, they then must take the chance of having a delay of what might undoubtedly be a considerable number of years, though not quite so many as the number the noble Marquess opposite mentioned. The noble Marquess was taking as a basis for that calculation the amount of £2,500,000, whereas my noble friend showed that we have been proceeding at a rate of close upon £5,000,000 a year. As I say, I hope it may be possible to find some way out on that road. I do not think the noble Earl was quite fair in saying that a stock at 92 is only worth 84⅓.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: It averaged that last year.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: It was then at a very much lower price than it has been since. The noble Earl might just as well have said, because Consols were at one time 113 and very likely averaged 108, that in the year afterwards, when they went down to 96, they were worth 108. You must take the figure of the moment, though it is quite fair, no doubt, to consider possible fluctuations in the future. That is really all I am able to say on the matter. We recognise the gravity of the position; and I can assure noble Lords opposite that we are by no means insensible to it. But we are not prepared, in the somewhat airy way which has been suggested by some noble Lords opposite, to take over all these liabilities and mortgage the future, or to adopt any of those schemes which are really a gamble on the Government stocks remaining at a certain figure a certain number of years hence. I cannot help thinking that if noble Lords opposite were not speaking as Irish landlords, but happened to be on this side of the House, their tone would necessarily have to be a different one so far as that point is concerned; and I fully recognise that the noble Marquess opposite, speaking not as an Irish landlord but as a reasonable person, adopted a somewhat different tone. I hope this discussion will prove to have been of a useful character, and if it should prove to be in any way of a fruitful character none of us will regret that it has been held.

*THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: My Lords, I do not intend to put your Lordships to the trouble of going to a division, and I hope, in taking that course, I can lay some claim to be considered a reasonable person. I only desire to make two points clear. Lord Denman stated that I was incorrect in saying that the inspectors troubled themselves with demesnes and sporting rights. I may say that they are distinctly requested to report upon these matters in the instructions issued by the Commissioners in accordance with the Lord-Lieutenant's Regulations. In paragraph 2 the inspector is asked to prepare and send in a report on the form prescribed showing—

"the character of any untenanted land or demesne and how it is used."

The inspector is also requested to describe any timber that may be growing on the estate, and to report on sporting rights and advise how they should be dealt with. There is no mention that these observations are to be confined to estates where the Commissioners are purchasing the demesne or entering into transactions with regard to the demesne. I have since learned from one of the officials from Ireland that, although these are the regulations, the inspectors do not, as a matter of fact, bother about desmesnes or sporting rights unless transactions are taking place concerning them. I am glad to hear that is so. The noble Earl has made it quite clear that it is in the mind of the Government that a solution might be found in asking some of us to take stock. I only desire to repeat that I sincerely hope, from the point of view of good faith, that, if stock is offered, those people who hold out and insist on having cash will not be placed in a position of inferiority or disadvantage in consequence. I think it would be a most unfair thing if that were done.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CROFTING PARISHES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Eight o'clock, till to-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 15*th July*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Second Reading deferred till Tuesday next, at a quarter past Eight of the clock.

Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to :—Police Superannuation Bill.

Amendments to Amendments to :—Leicester Corporation Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to :—Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Hull, in favour ; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Maiden Bradley, against ; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Brockley, for alteration ; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour : From Bradford ; Gospel Oak ; Hull ; Liverpool ; Paddington ; and Southgate ; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Wemyss, in favour ; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CRIMINAL AND JUDICIAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Criminal and Judicial Statistics of Ireland for the year 1907. Part I. Criminal Statistics [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

LABOURERS (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 6th May ; *Mr. O'Shaughnessy*] ; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877 (OXFORD).

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford, on the 11th March, 1908, amending Statute XVI., Clause 12, of the Statutes of the House [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 228.]

HARWICH HARBOUR.

Copy presented, of Abstract of the Accounts of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Harwich Harbour Conservancy Board from the time of their incorporation down to and inclusive of 31st March, 1908 [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (NORTH-WEST FRONTIER).

Copy presented, of Papers regarding (1) Orakzais, Request of certain Clans to be taken under British Administration (2) Zakka Khel Afridis, Operations ; (3) Mohmands, Operations [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

Copy presented, of Correspondence relating to Affairs in the East Africa Protectorate [by Command] ; to lie upon the Table.

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1859.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 8th July, 1908, declaring that for the due and efficient discharge of the duties of the office of Auditor in the Local Government Board for Ireland professional or other peculiar qualifications not ordinarily to be required in the Public Service are required [by Act] ; to lie upon the Table.

CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1908–9).

Estimate presented, of the Further Sums required to be voted for the service of the year ending 31st March, 1909 [by Command] ; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 229.]

TAXES AND IMPOSTS.

Return ordered, "showing : (1) the Rates of Duties, Taxes, or Imposts collected by imperial officers ; (2) the quantities or amounts taxed ; (3) the gross receipts derived from each Duty ; and (4) the net receipts and appropriations thereof in the year ending the 31st day of March, 1908 ; and (1) the aggregate gross receipts derived from all such

Duties, Taxes, or Imposts under the principal heads of revenue; (2) the aggregate net receipts; (3) the charges of collection; and (4) the produce, after deducting these charges, in each of the ten years ending the 31st day of March, 1908; and notes to show any changes in the Taxes, Duties, and Imposts consequent upon the acceptance of the Budget proposals of 1908 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 281, of Session 1907)."—(*Sir Daniel Goddard.*)

COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILS (WOMEN ELECTORS).

Return ordered, "showing the number of women in England and Wales who are qualified to vote for County Councils and for Councillors in municipal Boroughs indicating in each case what is the qualification which enables a Woman to be placed on the register."—(*Mr. Cameron Corbett.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Load-Line on British Ships.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been directed to the raising of the load-line on British ships, and the method by which the provision was made, namely, by order of the Department; also can he give the date of such order and of its operation.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Yes, Sir. My attention has been called to the alteration of the load-line tables to which my hon. friend refers. It was made by a Minute of the Board of Trade signed by the President on 1st March, 1906, and came into operation on and from that date.

Petition of Assistant Clerks in General Register of Shipping Office.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade when the assistant clerks (new class) employed in the General Register and Record Office of Shipping and Seamen may expect a reply to their petition of the 12th March, 1908, in which they ask for promotion to the Second Division on the ground that they are employed on superior duties.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Under Clause 15 of the Order in Council of November, 1898, promotion to the Second Division is only to be given exceptionally on the ground of special merit. In accordance with a decision which has been arrived at, the case of the assistant clerks (abstractor class) will be considered on the next vacancy, and on each alternate vacancy thereafter, with a view to considering whether a promotion should be made from that class. I may add that the staff have been informed of the position of the case.

Pay of Montrose Postal Servants.

Mr. R. HARCOURT (Montrose Burghs): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that recent changes in classification have reduced the maximum rate of pay of town postmen in Montrose from 24s. to 23s. per week; whether he is aware that, while the maximum at Montrose for eighty-five units of work is 23s., North Berwick for instance, with only fifty-four units, receives 25s.; and if steps can be taken to place Montrose postal servants in a better position.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) At Montrose the volume of work is represented by eighty-five units, and the index number for the cost of living as supplied by the Board of Trade is ninety-three. Montrose has, therefore, been properly placed in Class IV. At North Berwick, where the volume of work is represented by fifty-four units, it has been anticipated, by analogy, that the cost of living index number would be above the normal, and the office is, therefore, provisionally put in Class III.

Pay of Irish School Teachers.

Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the initial salary for a teacher in Irish primary schools; and whether, seeing that the adequacy of the initial salary has a considerable effect in inducing good men to enter the teaching profession, he will, in the interests of education, reconsider his scheme for the allocation of the proposed grant by increasing the initial salaries for all teachers and by recasting the scale of increments.

To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what provision is made for assistant teachers in Irish national schools in the allocation of the proposed grant; and whether, seeing that these men pass the same examinations, undergo the same course of training, do equal work, and are responsible in their schools as principals, and that according to the existing rules they are all paid only third-grade salary regardless of qualification or efficiency, steps will be immediately taken to make some adequate provision for this large body of Irish teachers in the new grant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The initial salary of national school teachers is for men £56 and for women £44, together with residual capitation grant in each case. I am in communication with the Commissioners of National Education with the object of arranging for the allocation of the new grant in such a manner as will ensure some benefit to all classes of teachers, assistants included.

Post Office Scales of Living.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): To ask the Postmaster-General what are the respective units of work and cost of living at Brentford, Chiswick, Acton, Richmond, Twickenham, Southall, Kingston, Wimbledon, Woolwich, Blackheath, and Hanwell.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The following is the information asked for:—

	Number of Units of Work.	Cost of Living Index Number.
Brentford - - - -	53	111
Kingston - - - -	343	115
Richmond - - - -	259	111
Southall - - - -	53	108
Twickenham - - -	140	No information at present.
Woolwich - - - -	312	116

Acton, Blackheath, Chiswick, Hanwell, and Wimbledon are in the London postal area, and for these places there are no units of work or index numbers of cost of living which can form comparison with those quoted above for provincial towns.

Salmon and Moray Firth Trawlers.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has any information to the effect that trawlers working in the Moray Firth sometimes obtain hauls of salmon; and, if so, whether he has received any complaints to this effect.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The only information at my disposal will be found on pages 76–7 of the Appendices to Part II. of the Fishery Board's Report for 1905. I have received no complaints.

Fishery Cruiser at Longhope.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH: To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state whether any, and, if so, what, decision has been arrived at in the matter of stationing a fishery cruiser at Longhope.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am not aware that the question of having a cruiser stationed at Longhope has ever been proposed or considered. The number of cruisers at the disposal of the Board is not sufficient to permit of one of them being detailed for duty at this place in particular.

Protection of Fisheries off Caithness.

MR. R. L. HARMSWORTH: To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the Grimsby-Norwegian trawler "Viking" was recently detected trawling within the three-mile limit off Lybster, Caithness, and whether, in order to prevent a repetition of this offence, he can see his way to station a fishery cruiser in this neighbouhood.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am aware that the trawler "Viking" was recently detected employed in trawling within the three-mile limit off Lybster, and that the case has been reported for prosecution; it is not practicable to station a fishery cruiser off Lybster, but frequent visits to the coast of Caithness are made.

Scottish Firms and Post Office Contracts.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Postmaster-General what was the extent in money of the contracts placed for uniforms, clothing, caps, etc., for use in his Department in Scotland in the year 1907; and how much of that sum was placed with Scottish firms having their premises in Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Separate contracts are not made for the stores of this kind required in Scotland. Their cost in 1907–8 was about £21,000. The sums paid for such stores to firms in Scotland was about £3,200, but these stores of Scottish manufacture would be used anywhere in the United Kingdom, not necessarily in Scotland.

Welsh Firms and Post Office Contracts.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his Department makes separate contracts with Welsh firms for tailoring, boots, waterproofs, etc., for postmen employed in Wales.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) No, Sir.

Manufacturing in Prisons.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the names of the prisons in which manufacturing is carried on; what articles are made in each; and which, if any, employ steam power.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Manufacturing is carried on in all the prisons in England and Wales, a list of which, and of the various employments, and industries carried on in each, is given in the Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prisons and Directors of Convict Prisons for the year ending 31st March, 1907. Steam power in connection with manufactures is used at Portland convict prison only, for cutting handstones for the Admiralty.

Borough of Hornsey Building Bye-Laws.

MR. IDRIS (Flint Boroughs) To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the building bye-laws submitted by the borough of Hornsey have yet been approved; and, if not, whether they will be approved before the Recess.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The bye-laws would have been confirmed last month but for a request from an objector, who asked for the confirmation to be postponed while he consulted various sanitary experts. He has now written sending copies of the Reports of the experts, and the Board are communicating with the town council on the subject with a view to an early settlement of the matter.

Foreign Trawlers in British Waters.

MR. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if the delay in approaching other Powers in connection with Foreign vessels trawling in the Moray Firth arises from the attitude of the English Board of Agriculture and Fisheries; and if the policy of the Scottish Fishery Board and the Irish Board with regard to closing areas against trawling meets with the approval of the English Board.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The policy to be adopted in this matter involves international considerations, and must be determined by the Government from the point of view of the United Kingdom as a whole. Communications with respect to it are proceeding as rapidly as possible between the various Departments concerned, but I am not in a position to add anything to the statements recently made by my right hon. friends the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary for Scotland.

Board of Fisheries.

MR. WILLIAMSON: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Fisheries desires the creation of one Board of Fisheries for the whole of the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Answer is in the negative.

Irish Universities Bill.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in its amended form the Irish Universities Bill contains proposals which would enable the senate of the Royal University of Ireland, or its successors, to continue to hold the examinations of that University over a period as long as may be thought reasonably required in order to afford due opportunities for undergraduates of that University to complete their academic degrees.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave on 29th June to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for East Kerry.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants on the Grehan Estate, Kildorrery.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners will give the date upon which Mr. John J. Therry, junior, became a judicial tenant of the three evicted farms on the Grehan estate, Kildorrery, County Cork; whether a fair rent was fixed in the Land Court or by a private arrangement with his father, Mr. John Therry, agent to the estate, and what are the terms; whether, seeing that Mr. John Therry, junior, lives over twenty miles away from these farms, and in another county, and does not use or cultivate them as ordinary farms in accordance with proper methods of husbandry, the Estates Commissioners will make further inquiries into all the circumstances with a view to the reinstatement of the tenants who have been evicted from these holdings; and when were the tenants in question evicted.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that an agreement and declaration, fixing a fair rent in this case, was lodged with the Land Commission on 4th November, 1903, the name of the tenant being John Therry, junior. The Estates Commissioners are of opinion that the lands could not be acquired compulsorily under the Evicted Tenants Act, but they are prepared to consider any representations to the contrary which may be made to them. The former tenants appear to have been evicted in 1890 and 1894.

Evicted Tenants—Application of John Lavery.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. Patrick Lavery, of Ballyline, Ballylongford, as representing John Lavery, an evicted tenant, has made an application to the Estates Commissioners for reinstatement; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have fully investgated this case, and have decided to take no action upon the application.

Irish Libraries.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many libraries have been established in Ireland by local authorities under the Acts of 1855 and 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am not in a position to furnish a complete Answer to the Question. The Local Government Board have a record of the cases in which loans have been sanctioned for the erection of libraries since 1900, in which year the power of sanctioning such loans was given to the Board. In many cases libraries have been erected by private beneficence and no loan was necessary.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Two New Destroyers.

MR. STANIER (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can give the names of the two destroyers bought by the Government to take the places of two ships lost, and with the names of the ones they replace; and whether they equal them in strength.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The purchase of two vessels is not yet completed, as the necessary trials have not yet been carried out to ascertain fully their capabilities. They are to replace the "Gala" and "Tiger." If the trials are satisfactory, it is considered they will not be less suitable for the service than the vessels they are to replace. Their names are not yet determined.

MR. STANIER: Are these the vessels mentioned in last night's debate as having been bought?

MR. McKENNA: Yes, but they will not be taken over unless the trials prove satisfactory.

MR. STANIER: Then they have been bought?

MR. McKENNA: Certainly.

Manning the Navy.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the class which provides officers for the Navy is less than one-twentieth part of the total population, and that those families which formerly supplied the engineer officers are now totally debarred from doing so because of their inability to pay the cost of training and maintenance of their sons at Osborne and Dartmouth; and will he consider the advisability of reducing the demands of the Treasury upon the parents and guardians of naval cadets in order to put a stop to this state of affairs.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I think my hon. friend should address his inquiries on this subject to my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Admiralty.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON: And if I put the Question to the First Lord he simply radiates pleasure and advises me to consult the Treasury.

Supply of Horses for the Army.

SIR SAMUEL SCOTT (Marylebone, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, having regard to the importance of having a complete census taken of all suitable horses in the United Kingdom before any scheme with respect to the encouragement of horse-breeding for Army purposes is formulated, whether the Government propose to undertake such a census, and when.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond): It is hoped that the County Associations will be able to supply all the required information without resorting to a general census. The Government do not, therefore, propose to consider the question of taking such a census until the Associations have been proved to be unable to produce the information.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): Can the hon. Gentleman tell us what means the County Associations have of obtaining this information?

MR. ACLAND: The matter is new to them. We have had a considerable number of communications from them as to their willingness to do all they can to furnish us with information as to the number of horses available.

MR. CHAPLIN: Do they hold out any hope that they will be able to supply the Government with an effective census?

MR. ACLAND: That will be a matter of experience. I think it is only natural that we should see what we can get from the Associations.

MR. CHAPLIN: Will not the Government reconsider their decision and attempt themselves to get this very necessary information?

MR. ACLAND: I think it would be better to wait and see what the County Associations can do.

Sir SAMUEL SCOTT: Will the Government make any grant towards the expenses of the County Association in carrying this out?

Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): Have the War Office received any complaints from those who lent horses to the War Office for camping purposes that they experienced great delay in securing payment?

Mr. ACLAND: That hardly arises out of the Question on the Paper.

Woolwich Common.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that there is abundant land to build on opposite the part of Woolwich Common he proposes to take; and whether, in the interest of the public, he will consider the possibility of taking this land instead of that proposed to be taken, and thus leave the public the use of the common they have always enjoyed.

Mr. ACLAND: I can assure my hon. friend that before the present site for the Royal Army Medical Corps building was finally selected, all possible suitable sites were duly considered; the proposal to build on Eltham Common being dropped in deference to public opinion. In the case of the site now selected the erection of a building behind the reservoir will not in any appreciable degree interfere with the amenities of the district, special care being taken not to remove the trees.

Mr. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Woolwich Common is the only recreation ground for Woolwich and Plumstead, with a population of 150,000, and as there are other places which can be used for these buildings will he leave the Common alone?

Mr. ACLAND: The Common is the freehold of the War Office, and we are careful in view of the fact stated by the hon. Member not to take more of the land than is absolutely necessary.

Plague in India.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he can state the number of people who have died from plague in India during the last year; and what steps have been taken to deal with this scourge.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): In the year ending 31st December last the number of deaths from plague was 1,204,194. If the twelve months ending 30th June, 1908, be taken, the number was 252,781, showing a very satisfactory decrease. Some account of the measures now adopted in combatting plague is given in the Return recently presented on the moral and material progress of India for the year 1906–7. They include the destruction of rats, the evacuation of infected quarters, the improvement of insanitary areas, and inoculation. Grants aggregating £200,000 a year have been made to Local Governments in this year's Budget for expenditure on sanitary improvements with special reference to the prevention of plague.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Does the hon. Gentleman consider 250,000 deaths a matter which can be deemed a source of satisfaction?

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yes, because taking the whole year the mortality has been steadily decreasing.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Can the hon. Gentleman supply the corresponding figures for the previous year, showing the increase or decrease as the case may be?

Mr. BUCHANAN: Certainly.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is it not the fact that plague has now been going on for eleven years, and has it not been fomented by the serum which the plague officers have distributed in places which have been free from it?

Mr. BUCHANAN: Unfortunately it has been going on a long time, but at present it is steadily declining owing to the action of the plague officers.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Is not the poverty of the people the real cause of the plague?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think that can be substantiated. It is one of the redeeming features of the situation that plague does not follow famine. It prevails mostly in the more well-to-do parts of India, and not in famine districts.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) asked if the total of 1,204,194 was not under ½ per cent. of the population——

*MR. SPEAKER: That leads to a matter of argument.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the mortality from plague in India, for the period during which the epidemic has prevailed, works out to an average of about 2·135 per 1,000 of the population; whether the mortality from tuberculosis in the United Kingdom last reported was about 1·6 per 1,000 of the population; whether, having regard to the general rates of mortality prevailing amongst Eastern populations, the death rate from plague in India implies any greater failure to stay its ravages on the part of the Government of India than may be established against the administrators of this country for the high death rate resulting from tuberculosis; and whether he will take steps to make known the efforts made in India to diminish the death rate from plague.

MR. BUCHANAN: The first figure given by the hon. Member is approximately correct, but the two averages quoted cannot in the Secretary of State's opinion be compared in the manner suggested. The steps taken to combat plague have already been made generally known through the Moral and Material Progress Report, and by other published statements.

*MR. REES: Is there any reason to suppose the Government of India have been neglectful of their obligations in this important matter?

MR. BUCHANAN: The figures show, on the contrary, that they have been very active indeed.

MR. LUPTON: Is it not the fact that previous plagues have generally been got rid of in seven months, whereas owing to the active operations of the Government this one has lasted eleven years?

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): Is it not the case that the severity of the plague is greater in Bombay Presidency than anywhere else, and does not that district suffer from a continual famine?

MR. BUCHANAN: As I have said, I do not think the connection between plague and famine can be substantiated. The figures point the other way. The plague has been most prevalent in the Punjab. The figures show perfectly clearly that the plague does not follow in the footsteps of famine.

*SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): Are not the chief factors in the reduction of plague in India the destruction of vermin and improved sanitation?

MR. BUCHANAN: Yes, Sir.

Dinizulu.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State is in possession of any information enabling him to fix the probable date of the termination of the preliminary examination of Dinizulu, or whether any definite charge has yet been formulated against that chief.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): No, Sir, I regret that up to the present it has not been possible to fix a definite date. If the prisoner is committed for trial the indictment will, of course, formulate definite charges.

MR. MACKARNESS: Is it not the fact that this preliminary examination has been going on for upwards of seven months, and that 100 witnesses have been examined on behalf of the prosecution?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, the examination has been going on for a long time, and a great number of witnesses have been examined; but at present it is not possible to say when this prolonged examination will be concluded.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Have any witnesses for this man's defence been examined?

COLONEL SEELY: As soon as the case for the prosecution is concluded witnesses for the defence will be called.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): Have any definite charges been formulated?

COLONEL SEELY: A great many charges have been brought, but definite charges have not been and will not be formulated until he is committed for trial, which is uncertain.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): Has this preliminary investigation to decide as to this man's guilt or innocence?

COLONEL SEELY: At present it is uncertain whether he is guilty or innocent; this is a preliminary investigation into various charges.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: But the hon. Gentleman said witnesses would be called for the defence.

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, after those for the prosecution.

MR. FLYNN: Is there any precedent in Colonial affairs for a preliminary examination lasting over seven months?

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot say definitely, but I believe this is a very exceptional case.

MR. REES: Is the gift of self-government to the Transvaal to be counterbalanced by the withdrawal of self-government from Natal?

COLONEL SEELY: No, and I do not think that question arises.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a Bill has been introduced into the Natal Legislature for the purpose of creating a special tribunal for the trial of Dinizulu; and, if so, with whom, under that Bill, rests the power of appointing the Judges to form the tribunal; and whether the law administered, and the rules of evidence applied, will be those in force in the Supreme Court of Natal.

COLONEL SEELY: The Bill has not yet been introduced and I am not, therefore, in a position to make any announcement. I hope, however, to be able to make a full statement before long.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Is it not the general opinion of Members of the House that the conduct of the prosecution of Dinizulu is vindictive and tyrannical to a degree, as well as absolutely abhorrent and contrary to the whole spirit of English justice?

COLONEL SEELY: The hon. Member has possibly more knowledge than I of the opinions of hon. Members.

Cotton Cultivation in Egypt.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can make a statement as to the experiments which have been undertaken in cotton-growing in Australia; and whether this industry is likely to develop in the Commonwealth.

COLONEL SEELY: My information is that cotton-growing has been tried on a small scale in Queensland, but so far without marked success. The area under cotton during the season 1905–6, viz.: 171 acres, had fallen by 1906–7 to 138 acres. Hopes are entertained that with the invention of a mechanical device for the picking of the cotton the industry will become firmly established, since the soil and conditions appear eminently suitable for the growth of this crop. Small areas in the Northern Territory have also been planted with cotton, while the tropical portions of Western Australia have long been regarded as suitable for its cultivation.

Repatriation of Chinese from the Transvaal.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the

Colonies whether at the opening of the Transvaal Parliament the Governor made a speech referring to the condition of the gold mining industry, and the effect upon it of the policy of repatriating the Chinese labourers; and whether he has official information of what was said by Lord Selborne on that occasion.

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, Sir. The speech contains the following statement: "The policy as regards indentured Chinese labourers which was adopted last session has been justified by complete success. Since March, 1907, and up to the end of May last, 31,157 Chinese labourers had already been repatriated, while the number of native labourers coming from all parts of South Africa to the mines has been and continues to be more than sufficient for all requirements. It is satisfactory also to note that while the gold output has been steadily increasing, the cost of mining has been undergoing steady reductions, and as a result of the efforts of the Government and of the leaders of the mining industry, that industry is to-day on a sounder basis than ever before, both as regards its present position and further expansion."

Trinidad Dock and Engineering Company.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if a protest has been received from the unofficial members of the Legislative Council of Port-of-Spain against the appointment of a Government director in connection with the Trinidad Dock and Engineering Company, Limited, at a salary of £250 per annum, such salary being paid by the Government; whether such director was recently pensioned on the ground of ill-health and the Finance Committee unanimously passed a resolution against such an appointment, but the Secretary of State made the appointment without their consent, intimating that it must be endorsed, if necessary, by the use of the official majority; and, if so, will he state what action, if any, the Government intend to take with a view to more respect being paid to the wishes of the direct representatives of the people.

COLONEL SEELY: The protest referred to has just been received. Pending the Secretary of State's consideration of the protest, and the return of a reply to the unofficial members of Council, it would be premature to make a statement on the subject in this House.

MR. SUMMERBELL: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the great dissatisfaction and disappointment caused by this overruling of the unanimous decision of the Finance Committee by the official Vote?

COLONEL SEELY: It would be inadvisable for me to make any partial statement now. I hope to be able to make a full one in a few days.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): Is it not the fact that the Government made it a condition of their co-operation in the establishment of this dock that they should have this official voting power?

COLONEL SEELY: I can add nothing to my Answer.

East Africa Legislative Council.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary for the Colonies when he will lay upon the Table the promised Papers with reference to the recent suspensions from the Legislative Council in East Africa.

COLONEL SEELY: Papers will be laid at the end of this week.

Carib Canal—St. Vincent Eruption Fund.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a loan from the St. Vincent eruption fund for the purpose of clearing volcanic ashes from the Carib Canal has twice been recommended by him to the Governor of the Windward Islands, with the concurrence of the Administrator of St. Vincent and the Legislative Council; whether the Governor stated that, in his opinion, the decision to refuse sanction for the loan should be reconsidered in the interests of the island; whether the Administrator concurred in this opinion; and whether, if so, he will now reconsider his decision.

I beg also to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his suggestion that a loan, not exceeding £5,000, should be made from the surplus revenue of St. Vincent for the purpose of re-opening the Carib Canal has been favourably received by the Governor of the Windward Islands, the Administrator of St. Vincent, the Legislative Council, and the community; and, if not, whether he still insists on it as preferable to a loan from the eruption fund.

COLONEL SEELY: It is true that the grant of a loan from the eruption fund has twice been recommended by the Governor of the Windward Islands, with the concurrence of the Administrator of St. Vincent, though we have not been informed that the Legislative Council also concurred. The Secretary of State has not yet received a reply to his telegram, agreeing, on certain conditions, to a loan from surplus revenue. He does not, however, propose to depart from the decision of his predecessor, in which he has already expressed his concurrence, that the invested portion of the eruption fund should be held as a reserve against future disaster and should not be invested locally.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Does not the hon. Gentleman consider it a serious interference with the wishes of the Colonies not to pursue the course unanimously suggested by the Governor, the local Administrator, and the Legislative Council, and approved by all members of the community?

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot say it is approved by all Members of the community. No doubt it would be to the advantage of some, but in the view of the Secretary of State and his predecessor it would not be to the advantage of others.

Metropolitan Police—Promotion from the Ranks.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Chief Constables there are in the Metropolitan districts; how many of these have been raised from the ranks; what were the qualifications of those who hold these positions which caused them to be preferred to those who have spent their lives at the business; and whether he will in future, in making these appointments, refrain from bringing in outsiders unless it is impossible to find suitable candidates among those already in the force.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): There are five Chief Constables in the Metropolitan Police district, none of whom has been raised from the ranks. Their qualifications for their duties were acquired in His Majesty's service at home and abroad. As regards future appointments, I can only say that, in the event of a vacancy, I shall not limit the area of my choice, but shall appoint the person who, in my opinion, is best fitted to fill the post.

MR. WATT: May I ask if under the *regime* of the present Government the promotions from the ranks have been more numerous?

MR. GLADSTONE'S reply was inaudible.

Convict Prisons—Warders' Hours of Duty.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the average hours of duty of warders in convict prisons, reckoned on the basis of a working week of six days and calculated from the figures given in the official standing orders, are eleven hours ten minutes per day exclusive of meal times; and whether, in view of this fact, he will take steps to remedy the grievance by creating a third division of warders to relieve the duties of the existing staff.

MR. GLADSTONE: The longest average hours of duty of warders in convict prisons reckoned on the basis of a working fortnight of twelve days and calculated as above are ten hours thirty-three minutes. It is impossible to give an average reckoned on a weekly basis, as the hours vary in alternate weeks. The Directors have not heard of any alleged grievance.

Licence Transfers in London.

Mr. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has observed that, by the Return relating to the licence transfers just issued, out of a total number of 6,960 on-licences in the petty sessional divisions of London, 1,637 such licences, or 23·5 per cent. of the total, were transferred during the year 1907, and that 160 cases occurred in these districts where such licences were transferred twice or more during the period; and whether the police have instructions to call the attention of licensing benches to cases where the frequency of transfer would suggest the inference that the licence is not required.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am aware of the figures to which my hon. friend draws attention. I do not think any special instructions to the police in this matter are needed. All the facts as to frequency of transfers are in each case before the justices, who are the authority to determine whether a licence is redundant, and who can draw their own inferences from them.

The Imprisoned Suffragists.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the statements of Mr. J. W. Logan, who was for many years a Member of this House, that the ladies, of whom his daughter is one, who were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in connection with the agitation for woman suffrage, are placed in solitary confinement for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four, have prison dress, have coarse prison food to eat, are not allowed to have letters or books or newspapers, except one book a week from the prison library, which they are not allowed to read until after 5 p.m., and that the one hour out of the twenty-four in which they are not in solitary confinement is spent half in chapel and the remaining half at exercise in a yard where they are not allowed to speak to any person; in what respects, if any, does this punishment differ from the prison discipline enforced on prisoners guilty of heinous crimes; how many ladies are at present subject to this treatment for offences of a political character which has been inflicted on them in the discretion of a magistrate; and whether he will in these cases advise the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown for the removal or reduction of the cruel and humiliating incidents of such an imprisonment.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The prisoners are treated as all other prisoners in the second division. They are in separate confinement for about twenty-two and a half hours out of the twenty-four, one hour being given to exercise and about half an hour to chapel; they wear the authorised dress for the second division; are given the same diet as offenders of the first division who do not maintain themselves; they are not allowed to converse with each other, nor to receive letters until they have been in prison one month. They are allowed two library books a week. They may read these at meal hours and after working hours. This punishment differs from that of prisoners "convicted of heinous crimes" in the following particulars: The diet of the latter is not so good, and for the first seven days not so plentiful. They are not allowed letters until they have served two months, and they are not allowed library books until they have served one month, and then only one per week. They are not altogether separated from other criminals. There were twenty-one of the suffragist prisoners yesterday, but as any of them can secure their release at any time by giving security for good behaviour, I cannot say whether the number is the same now. I cannot advise the exercise of the prerogative of mercy.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Are these ladies, whom the right hon. Gentleman has termed criminals, compelled to wear prison clothes formerly worn by ordinary women criminals?

Mr. GLADSTONE: They are under the rules which govern the second division.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Have they not, as a matter of fact, worn the cast-off clothes of other prisoners?

MR. GLADSTONE: I really cannot quite say. Of course, new clothing cannot be supplied to all the prisoners who come in, but every care is taken that the clothing should be supplied in a state of perfect cleanliness.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Are these ladies obliged to take whatever exercise they get practically in association with those who have been convicted of ordinary criminal offences?

MR. GLADSTONE: That is not the case. They are kept apart from ordinary criminals.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Do they have a separate exercise ground for simply march round with the other inmates of the prison?

MR. GLADSTONE: They are carefully kept from association with the ordinary prisoners.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): Has the right hon. Gentleman reason to believe that any one of these ladies has herself made a complaint?

MR. GLADSTONE: I have received no complaint myself from any one of them.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): What good object is served by limiting the number of books allowed to these ladies?

MR. GLADSTONE: That is a Question that might be asked in regard to the general prison rules, and I am not at all satisfied that the rule is adequate, but I do not think the question necessarily arises now.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Are the books given to these ladies only such books as are in the prison library—goody-goody Sunday-school books?

MR. LUPTON: May I ask——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. Notice must be given of any further Questions.

Flogging Sentence at Newcastle Assizes.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a telegram sent to him on Thursday from Mr. Collinson, the honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League, directing his attention to a sentence of imprisonment for twelve months with hard labour and twelve lashes, passed by Mr. Justice Bigham at the Newcastle Assizes, on a man named Rogerson, under the provisions of the Garrotting Act; whether the punishment of the lash has yet been inflicted; if so, whether he has investigated the circumstances of the crime, and satisfied himself that the case is one in which it would be improper to advise the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown for the remission of the punishment of flogging; whether, if the flogging has not yet been inflicted, he will investigate the circumstances with a view to its remission if consistent with the interests of justice; and whether, having regard to the fact that the punishment of the lash is confined to one class of crime, is at all times in the discretion of the Judge, and is never ordered by the great majority of the Judges, he will in cases in which prisoners are sentenced to such punishment consider the facts of the case with a view, if possible, to the remission of the punishment.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention has been drawn to this case, and I have made inquiry, with the result that I find that there are no grounds which would justify the exercise of the prerogative. The prisoner can, under the Criminal Appeal Act, apply to the Court of Criminal Appeal for leave to appeal against his sentence. In this, as in other cases, the order for corporal punishment will not be carried out till after the lapse of the ten days during which the prisoner can make his application. While I am ready to consider any representations that may be made to me for the exercise of the prerogative on behalf of prisoners sentenced to corporal punishment, it would, in my opinion, be improper, having regard to the provisions of the Criminal Appeal Act of last session, to take the action suggested by the hon. and learned Member.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Has the punishment yet been inflicted?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I believe not.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: You ought to know.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am giving the hon. Member what information I have.

Hyde Park Unemployed Collection.

Mr. CROOKS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the police seized a box into which the public were throwing money for the unemployed in Hyde Park on Monday evening; and whether the box and its contents will be restored to the men.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir; a collection of money was being made in contravention of the Park Regulations, which forbid such collections being made without the leave of the Commissioners of Works. As the collectors persisted after warning by the police, the latter, in the execution of their duty, siezed the box. A case is pending in Court in connection with this incident, and the magistrate dealing with it will be asked to give instructions as to the disposal of the money, which amounts to 9s. 4d.

Thames Fatalities near Hammersmith Bridge.

Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that on different dates since January, 1905, six children have been drowned at the Barnes side of the Thames, near Hammersmith Bridge, through accidents which might have been avoided by proper protection of the river bank; and whether, as the place named is continually used by playing children, his Department can, through the Thames Conservancy, take immediate action effectively to guard against a continuance of these cases of drowning.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I have ascertained from the Home Office that six children have been drowned at the spot indicated since January, 1905, and that the police have been instructed to pay every attention to the place, particularly in school holiday time, with a view to preventing further fatalities, though it is doubtful whether anything short of the provision of a wall or railing on this somewhat steep embankment will make it safe. The Thames Conservancy inform me that they are under no obligation to fence towpaths to prevent people falling into the river, but they are ready to give the local authority permission to construct protective works, provided these do not interfere with the use of the towpath or navigation.

London Tube Railways—Precautions against Fire.

Mr. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been specially directed to the Report, published on Saturday by his Department, made by Captain A. P. Trotter, relating to his inquiry into the fire which broke out recently in an electric carriage on the Liverpool and Southport Railway, and, having in view the liability to such fires inseparable from all electrically-driven railway carriages, what regulations have been made for the protection of the public from the consequences which might ensue from any such fire upon any of the London passenger railway tubes; and whether a copy of such regulations has been ordered to be publicly exhibited at the stations of all such railways for public information and assurance.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The Board of Trade have made special requirements regarding the construction of tube railways with the object of guarding against the risk of fire. These requirements, however, relate to materials, ventilation, insulation, lighting and such matters, and a knowledge of them by passengers would not, I think, add to safety. I may add that hydrants and fire hose are fixed on every platform, and fire extinguishers are carried in every carriage. Copies of Mr. Trotter's Report have been sent to the railway companies which have adopted electric traction.

American Beef Trust.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of

Trade whether he has any official information showing that a group of capitalists in America have formed a combination called the Beef Trust to control the beef supply of that country, which has been the subject of official investigation by the United States Senate, that that combination has secured control of four-fifths of the imports of beef into this country, and is now in process of securing, by acquiring the means of retail distribution, the same control of the beef supply here that the Beef Trust has already secured in America; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any, and, if any, what, action in the matter.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am aware of the official report of the United States Commissioner of Corporations (published in 1905) as to the operations of the six firms constituting what is known as the "Beef Trust," and I am also aware that these firms deal with a large proportion of the imports of beef into the United Kingdom. The operations of these firms in regard to the supply of this country are receiving the careful attention of His Majesty's Government.

LORD R. CECIL: Does not the right hon. Gentleman consider that the facts he has stated constitute a *prima facie* for an inquiry by a Select Committee?

MR. CHURCHILL: No; as at present advised, I have not arrived at that conclusion. The matter, however, is receiving constant attention.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of meeting the evil effects of this trust, the Government will not take into consideration the advisability of allowing cattle to be imported from countries where there is no cattle disease?

MR. CHURCHILL: That is a question of much delicacy, and I fear I could not do justice to it within the limits of an answer.

Eye Guardians and the Press.

MR. CLYNES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that by the casting vote of the chairman of the Eye Guardians the Press representatives were excluded from the last meeting of the Board, after the chairman stating that it was undesirable to give persons an opportunity of advertising themselves; and whether he will inquire if the exclusion prevented publicity respecting the punishment of a girl suffering from a contagious disease, and the overworking and ill-treatment of female inmates.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I understand that at the meeting referred to the representatives of the Press were, by the casting vote of the chairman, asked to withdraw during the reading of the correspondence only. They were informed that it was competent to them to return immediately the correspondence had been dealt with, but they did not avail themselves of this permission. Had they done so, they would have been present when the punishment book was under discussion. The clerk informs me that their exclusion did not prevent publicity respecting the matters mentioned by my hon. friend, that no question of ill-treatment of any inmates was referred to, and that he is not aware of the existence of any such question.

The Motor Act.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the habitual disregard of the provisions of the Motor Act and the impossibility of enforcing its provisions, he will consider whether it would be desirable to omit the Act from the operation of the Expiring Laws Continuance Act.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The Prime Minister has asked me to reply to this Question. The effect of omitting the Motor Car Act, 1903, from the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill would practically be to restore matters to the position in which they stood prior to the passing of that Act. It was the unsatisfactory condition of things then existing that led to the legislation of 1903, and I do not think the suggestion of my hon. friend could practically be adopted. I may point out that, if it were, motor cars could still be used on the highways, but they would be freed from any statutory limit of speed, and that it would no longer be necessary that they should be registered and carry identification marks, or that the drivers should be licensed. The penalties to which offenders would be liable would also be lessened.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that if there had been no Motor Car Act motor cars would have been limited to a speed of twelve miles an hour, and that under present conditions the law is openly and systematically violated by persons in high stations?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have nothing to add to the Answer I have given, except to say that both the Home Secretary and myself are quite prepared to consider sympathetically any representations with a view to our actions when they emanate from local authorities, who are responsible, and who, so far, have taken very little action in the matter.

Poor Law Commission.

MR. CHAPLIN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any information as to the probable date when the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law may be expected; and, if so, whether there is any reasonable ground for expecting that it may be presented by the time that Parliament reassembles in October or during that month.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. I stated on 20th May last that the Royal Commission hoped they might be able to present their Report in the autumn, but that it was impossible to give a precise date by which it would be issued. I have since made further inquiry on the subject, but I cannot add anything to what I then stated.

MR. CHAPLIN: I will repeat the Question very shortly.

British Parcel Mail for Ecuador.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that our postal authorities despatch all British parcel mails for Ecuador via the Straits of Magellan, a route of over 10,600 miles, and the average time for this mail is eighty-five days, while, if this parcel mail was despatched by the Isthmus of Panama, a distance of 5,600 miles, it would be delivered in Ecuador in twenty-five days; whether he is aware that the present arrangement gives foreigners an advantage over British manufacturers because goods are ordered from countries where rapid transit can be ensured; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): All parcels from the United Kingdom for Ecuador are sent by way of France pending the conclusion of an Agreement for a direct service, as to which I have for some time been awaiting a further communication from the Government of Ecuador. The route *via* Panama is, so far as I am aware, available for parcels sent from this country to France for transmission to Ecuador; and a notification to this effect appears in the Post Office Guide. I am making inquiry of the French Administration whether any obstacle has arisen to the use of this route, and I will acquaint my hon. friend with the result. I should add that the time taken *via* Magellan is less and that *via* Colon is more than the hon. Member supposes.

Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Charges.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been drawn to the anomalies in parcel post charges from Great Britain and Ireland to our Colonial possessions and to foreign countries; whether parcels to Canada of three pounds weight cost 1s. 8d., while to India the same parcel can be sent at a charge of 1s., also by parcel post; whether goods from Germany and other foreign countries can be sent by parcel post to Great Britain and to our Colonies at a considerably lower rate than from the United Kingdom to foreign countries and our Colonial possessions; and whether he will agree to the appointment of a Select Committee of business men in the House of Commons to inquire and report on the question of foreign, inland, and Colonial parcel post charges.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON : I am aware that the parcel post scales are not free from anomalies, and I have for some time been considering whether and what improvements can be effected. But in many cases the charge is determined by the special circumstances of the country concerned. I do not see that any advantage would be gained by the appointment of a Select Committee.

Report of the Small Holdings Commissioners.

MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, when the interim Report of the Small Holdings Commissioners, which he hoped would be ready early in July, will be laid upon the Table.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The Report is in a forward state of preparation, and I hope it may be found possible to issue it at the end of the month. Its preparation has involved greater labour than was originally anticipated.

MR. MORRELL: Will it be ready before the holidays.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I cannot say. There is, I believe, a great deal still to be done.

Capital for Small Holdings.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in the case of every applicant who can satisfy either the council of the county or the Commissioners that he has sufficient capital and experience to manage a small holding, the Commissioners will say that, within a reasonable period from the date of his application, he will have the opportunity of obtaining land in or near his own locality at what is approximately the market price of such land, after allowing only for the cost of equipment and management.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I can only say that it will be the duty of the Commissioners and of the Board to see that the provisions of the Act are carried out in their integrity.

MR. MORRELL: If an individual applicant fails to satisfy the county council on this point, has he a right of appeal?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I cannot answer a hypothetical Question.

Applications for Small Holdings.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the number of applications which have been sent direct to the Commissioners under the Small Holdings Act.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: 2,360.

MR. MORRELL: Then what has happened to the others? 18,000 applications, I understood, had been made.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Question is as to the number of applications made direct to the Commissioners. The rest, over 16,000, have been made direct to the various county councils, which is the best way.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the total number of persons who have made applications for land under the Small Holdings Act; how many of these applications have been considered; how many applicants have withdrawn their applications or failed to attend the local inquiry; how many applicants have been rejected as unsuitable; how many applications are covered by schemes already submitted to the Commissioners; how many applications are standing over until suitable land can be obtained; and whether the Commissioners have yet decided to establish a record containing full particulars of all applications made.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: So far as the Board are aware 19,647 applications have been received. We do not as yet possess full information on the other points to which my hon. friend refers, inasmuch as several councils have not yet completed their inquiries, but on receipt of Reports from all the county councils of their proceedings under the Act the Board will for all practical purposes be in possession of full particulars of all applications made.

Mr. MORRELL: Is there any intention of establishing a record of the applications made?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: No, Sir. The President of the Board of Agriculture does not intend to establish a separate register, but when the returns come in from the various county councils they would constitute an effective list.

Mr. MACKARNESS: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a large number of applications are not made owing to the hours at which the meetings of the sub-committee are held? Will he consider some means of giving an opportunity——

*Mr. SPEAKER: That is another matter altogether. Notice had better be given.

Administration of the Small Holdings Act.

Mr. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the total number of persons specially appointed under Clause 1 of the Small Holdings Act, whether as Commissioners or assistants, for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of the demand for small holdings in England and Wales and the extent to which it is reasonably practicable to satisfy it.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Six.

Mr. MORRELL was understood to suggest that that was a small number in view of the extent of the demand for small holdings in England and Wales.

Mr. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): Are there two Commissioners and four Assistant Commissioners?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: There are two Commissioners and four inspectors doing the work.

Cost of Small Holdings Inquiries.

Mr. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board will direct that no part of the expenses incurred by a county council in ascertaining the demand for and under the Small Holdings Act and the suitability of applicants can legally be included in expenses of management, so as to increase the rent of the holdings; and whether he can say what arrangements the Board propose to make for the payment of these preliminary expenses.

I beg also to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board will direct that the salaries of all agents and officers specially appointed by county councils to assist in the establishment of small holdings under the Act should be apportioned up to the date at which such holdings are actually established; and whether the portion of the salary up to that date will be repaid by the Board.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board have no reason to suppose that county councils in fixing the rents to be paid by small holders will act otherwise than in conformity with the Act, and they see no necessity for the issue of any special instructions in the matter. The manner in which the expenses of county councils (other than those which are either repayable by the Board or must be taken into account in fixing rents) should be met is under consideration.

Mr. MORRELL: Do the Commissioners say it is impossible to charge the expenses of management against the small holders until the small holdings have been established?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: They have made no statement as far as I am aware. It is their duty to see that the Act is carried out.

Royal London Friendly Society.

Mr. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether steps are being taken to test the legality of the poll taken on 24th June, 1908, with regard to the conversion of the Royal London Friendly Society into a mutual insurance company; and whether the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies will undertake that the resolutions in favour of conversion said to have been carried by such poll shall not take effect until the legality of the poll has been established.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: We have no power to take steps to test the legality of the poll of a meeting of any friendly society, neither has the Chief Registrar of friendly societies any jurisdiction as to the legality of the poll, which is a matter that can only be settled by an action in the King's Bench Division of the High Court. He has, however, to be satisfied that the resolutions of such meetings have been passed in accordance with the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act before he can give effect to them.

Old-Age Pensions.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the action of Judge Ruegg at Tunstall, who upon application from an old man who was receiving compensation at the rate of 12s. 6d. a week converted that annuity into a lump sum of £20 and a reduced annuity of 9s. 6d. a week in order to enable the applicant to obtain a pension under the Bill recently before this House; whether that Bill contains any provisions which will either render penal or neutralise the effect of such arrangements for increasing the burden upon the taxpayers; and, if not, whether he will introduce Amendments to the Bill in another place dealing with the matter.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (for Mr. Lloyd-George): Clause 4 (3) of the Bill is designed to "neutralise the effect" of such arrangements as that referred to in the Question.

Mr. HAROLD COX: Will that clause be retrospective in action?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I cannot answer for the moment.

Inebriates Acts in Scotland.

Mr. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can yet say when he will appoint the Departmental Committee to inquire into the working of the Inebriates Acts in Scotland.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): I hope very shortly.

Island of Lewis Fishing Industry.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a memorial from the people of Valtos, Uig, Island of Lewis, directing attention to the failure of the fishing industry and pressing for the establishment of relief works, such as the construction of roads, which are badly needed in the district; and will he state what action he proposes to take in the matter.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The petition referred to by my hon. friend has been received and has been referred to the Congested Districts Board. It is now under consideration.

Deer Forests and Sheep Ranches at Uig.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a memorial from the Cottars and Crofters Association, Uig, Island of Lewis, pointing out that there is land in the parish now used as sheep ranches and deer forests sufficient for the settlement of 1,800 families; and, in view of the fact that this land was formerly in the occupation of small holders, will the Congested Districts Board communicate with the proprietor with a view to some arrangement being arrived at by which the land may be made available for the people.

Mr. SINCLAIR: This is the same memorial referred to by my hon. friend in his previous Question. It is receiving consideration.

Mr. WEIR: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of the Question?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I can add nothing to the Answer I have given.

Mr. WEIR: A most unsatisfactory Answer.

Motor Speeds in Scotland.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state in how many instances local authorities in Scotland have applied for powers to regulate the speed of motors cars in their districts; and will he state whether he would favour local authorities being empowered to limit speed in their districts without appeal to the Scottish Office.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Eighty-four applications have been received from local authorities. As regards the second part of my hon. friend's Question, I cannot anticipate the decision which His Majesty's Government may reach when an opportunity for legislation occurs.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: Have any applications for power been refused?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I will inquire.

Poor Relief in the Island of Lewis.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland in view of the fact that, in order to meet the immediate necessities of poor relief in the Island of Lewis, certain payments in advance of grants-in-aid, not under ordinary circumstances payable till later in the year, have been authorised, will he state the actual amount of such payments, and to whom they were made; and will he state the amount of the demand note the non-payment of which has necessitated special assistance from the Government.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Advance payments have been made as follows:—1908. 16th May: to Inspector of Poor, Uig, £100; 19th June, to Inspector of Poor, Barvas, £150; 19th June: to Inspector of Poor, Lochs, £150; 11th July: to Inspector of Poor, Uig, £150. With reference to the second part of my hon. friend's Question I am taking steps to ascertain the precise amount of the demand notes in respect of which payment has not been made.

Mr. WEIR: I will repeat the Question this day week.

Scottish Justice of the Peace Courts.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the manner in which Justice of the Peace Courts are constituted in Scotland, and to the fact that certain Justices are constantly called thereto, while others are never at any time asked to attend; will he say who is responsible for the choice of Justices to sit on the Bench at any particular time; and will he issue instructions by which the work will be more equally divided.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs): No expressions of any dissatisfaction with the existing state of matters have reached me. But I may explain to my hon. friend that the procedure and attendance at Justice of the Peace Courts are subject to the regulation of the Justices themselves. All the responsibility for the arrangements and sittings rests with them, and I could not assume any power on the subject.

Mr. WATT: Is it possible under the present system for a Justice of the Peace Clerk to pack a Bench if he feels so inclined?

Mr. THOMAS SHAW: I should not like to say that was possible in any Court in Scotland. May I suggest to my hon. friend that now I have given him the cue he should in any case that comes to his notice apply to the Clerk of the Peace in whose jurisdiction it arises.

Charleville Labourers' Cottage Inquiry.

Mr. FLYNN. I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government

Board have been made aware of the fact that, following the recent inquiry in Charleville in March under the Labourers Acts, forty-two applications for the extra half-acre out of 104 approved by the district council were rejected by the inspector, and that dissatisfaction prevails amongst the deserving labourers of the district owing to the large number of rejections; is the Board aware that the reason assigned by the inspector for the rejection of these forty-two applications is that the present plots were badly kept; that the forty-two rejected applications include those of Messrs. T. Moffit, M. Ryan, P. Cagney, J. Collins, J. O'Gorman, and several others whose plots are considered as model plots by the judges who inspected them on behalf of the Munster Dairy School, and Agricultural Institute; that Mr. T. Moffit secured a first prize in 1906, and a second prize in 1907, for a well-kept garden, and Mr. M. Ryan a first prize of first class on similar grounds; and whether, in view of these facts, the Board will re-open the inquiry, or take other requisite steps to prevent industrious deserving labourers being deprived of the advantages given to Irish labourers by legislation for the improvement of their conditions of life.

Mr. BIRRELL: It is the fact that the inspector rejected forty-two applications for additional plots, and in some, but by no means all, of the cases the ground of rejection was that the existing plots were badly kept. In the cases of Moffit and Ryan specially referred to, the applications were disallowed, partly because the existing plots are badly kept, and partly because they are already considerably more than half an acre in extent. Moreover there are less than seven and a half acres in the holding, from which it was proposed to take these and six other new allotments, making four acres in all; manifestly a most unreasonable proposal. The inspector's order was issued in May last. The Local Government Board see no reason why the inquiry should be re-opened, and in any case they have no power to re-open it.

Mr. FLYNN: Then the applications were not rejected because the plots were badly kept?

Mr. BIRRELL: No, in some cases, the reason was that the existing holdings were considerably more than half an acre.

Untenanted Land in County Clare.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the amount of grass land in County Clare, which might be made available for the enlargement of uneconomic holdings under the Land Purchase Acts.

Mr. BIRRELL: According to a Return which appears in Appendix VII. to the Third Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion, County Clare contains 43,523 acres of untenanted land, not including demesnes bog, plantation, mountain, and other land of very small value.

Clare Light Railway.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what is the annual cost to the ratepayer of County Clare of the Clare Light Railways.

Mr. BIRRELL: The accounts of the Clare County Council show that during the financial year ending 31st March, 1907, the net expenditure upon the railways in question was £11,734, of which the sum of £6,098 was provided by the Treasury contribution, and the grant from the Local Taxation Account, leaving £5,636 as the net cost to the county.

Irish Court Houses.

Mr. CULLINAN (Tipperary S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that under the Local Government Act county councils are compelled to pay high rent for premises used for the holding of Petty Session Courts in the smaller towns; that the said Courts, which are held generally once in each month, last not more than one or two hours, and the premises are idle in the meantime; whether county councils, while willing to take ample precautions for the upkeep and proper protection of these premises, cannot use them for in arrear out of a total of 38,963. By the 1st of the present month payment had been made in 769 of these cases, leaving 305 still in arrear.

Advertising Irish Pleasure Resorts.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tourist traffic to Larne, County Antrim, is suffering from want of advertising, and that the Larne Urban Council complain that they have no power to spend any money in this way; and whether he will consider the advisability of amending the Irish Local Government Act to enable local authorities like Larne to use a small portion of the funds which they administer for this purpose, as is done by some local authorities in Great Britain.

MR. BIRRELL: I think it would be desirable to give power to local authorities of places such as Larne to expend a reasonable amount on advertisements of the nature indicated, and I understand that such a provision would be welcomed by the people of seaside places in Ireland generally. A clause on the subject might be inserted in the Local Government (Ireland) Bill at present before the House, assuming that the progress of the Bill would not be thereby endangered. I should be glad to discuss the terms of such a clause with the hon. Member.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman himself propose the necessary clause?

MR. BIRRELL: Yes, if an agreement can be come to.

Belfast Health Commission.

MR. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can now state what was the total cost of the Belfast Health Commission; what was the amount expended by the Local Government Board, the Belfast Corporation, and the Belfast Water Board, respectively; and how much of the expenditure of the Local Government Board will be borne by the Treasury and how much by the Corporation and by the Water Board respectively.

MR. BIRRELL: The costs of the Local Government Board amounted to £1,931 10s. 10d., of which £500 will be borne by the Board and the balance will be charged to the City. No apportionment of this balance has yet been made between the different local bodies. The Local Government Board have no knowledge of the costs incurred outside their own department.

MR. J. DEVLIN: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what steps are being taken to carry out the recommendations of the Commission?

MR. BIRRELL: I will inquire.

Potato Blight in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he has received any reports as to potato blight in County Clare; and, if so, what steps his Department are taking to deal with this evil.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): A few cases of potato blight have been reported from districts in the East and West of Clare and spraying as a preventive is being carried out through the county generally. The Department have already suggested to the County Committee of Agriculture that they should purchase a number of hand-sprayers to be hired out to small farmers at a nominal daily charge in addition to those purchased last year.

Agricultural College for County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he will consider the claims of the County Clare for the establishment of an agricultural college; and when he will be able to receive a deputation on this subject.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I hope to arrange to receive a deputation on this subject from County Clare early in August.

Donegal Dairy Farmers' Grievances.

MR. C. MACVEIGH: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he is aware of the hardships that the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops (Ireland) Order, will inflict upon the small farmers in many parts of Donegal; and seeing that if the Order is enforced they will require to build a new stand of office houses, which is entirely beyond their means, whether he will state what steps, if any, he will take to have the Order modified or withdrawn from operating in the poorer districts.

MR. BIRRELL: The Order in question is an Order of the Local Government Board and not of the Department of Agriculture. It contains a clause which prescribes that the provisions as to the lighting and ventilation of cowsheds shall not apply if the medical officer of health or a veterinary surgeon appointed by the local authority certifies that the existing arrangements are sufficient. The provisions of this Order are very necessary in the interests of the public health.

Limerick Postal Staff Grievances.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if trivial irregularities committed by certain members of the Limerick postal staff are being recorded in the error book at that office; and, if so, will he take steps to have the instruction, governing the treatment of minor irregularities, contained in the Post Office Circular, No. 1,812, strictly adhered to in future.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have received no appeal on this subject from any member of the staff at Limerick. Any appeal made will, of course, receive careful consideration.

Bad Debts in Ireland.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether £9,500,000 has been written off as a bad debt from sums advanced by the Treasury, the Public Works Loans Commissioners, the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland), and the Irish Land Commission, to public bodies or private persons in Ireland since 1881.

MR. HOBHOUSE (for Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE): No, Sir. The amount of the loans written off in that period is £1,744,427.

SIR F. BANBURY: Has the hon. Gentleman added together the amounts in the Paper to which I was referred last night, and is this the correct total?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have looked carefully through the amounts submitted to me, and this is the total.

SIR F. BANBURY: Has the hon. Gentleman added them up or is that beyond his power?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Licensing Bill.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): When will the terms of the guillotine Resolution on the Licensing Bill, which I understand is to be proposed on Friday, appear on the Paper?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): To-morrow.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 230.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 230.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 321.]

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BILL.

Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 231.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 231.]

Bill to be taken into consideration To-morrow.

NEW BILLS.

TOWN TENANTS BILL.

"To improve the position of Tenants of certain houses, shops, and other buildings in Great Britain," presented by Mr. Dickinson; supported by Mr. Barker, Sir John Benn, Mr. Buckmaster, Mr. Timothy Davies, Mr. Gibb, Mr. Maclean, Sir Charles McLaren, and Mr. Rowlands; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 322.]

BUILDING OPERATIONS AND ENGINEERING WORKS BILL.

"To make better provision for the health and safety of persons employed in certain Building Operations and Engineering Works, and purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Secretary Gladstone; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 323.]

GRAND JURY (IRELAND) ACT (1836) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend Section 67 of the Grand Jury (Ireland) Act, 1836, with respect to Piers, Quays, and other works; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 324.]

FINANCE BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 6:

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) moved to omit all the words in subsection (3) following the words "forty thousand pounds." He said he did so in order to obtain an opinion from the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the bearing which this clause had upon the county councils. He hoped they would be told exactly the reason why these taxes had been handed back after being taken last year by the Exchequer. He thought the right hon. Gentleman must be aware that there was fear amongst the local authorities that this change was not going to be for their benefit, and that the £40,000 which had been allotted to enable them to collect these taxes would not be found sufficient. According to the clause the money was to be expended exactly in proportion to the amount raised by each local authority. He assumed that the change had been made for two reasons; the first being that the raising of the duties by local authorities would be more efficient than by the Government authorities, and that they would in some way also secure economy. If that was so he thought they ought to understand exactly how they stood. As far as he could see, the £40,000 was something under 2 per cent. of the money to be levied, and when they considered the extremely arduous duties in connection with dog licences, game licences, and licences of that character, and the necessity for an efficient staff throughout all the area of the local authority, they must be aware that in the case of the small local authorities the amount obtained by them on the actual amount levied would be extremely small. They understood that the Government's action last year was a preliminary step to dealing with local taxation as a whole, and he thought it was acknowledged by the Government and by all parties in the House that in any case of dealing with local taxation more rather than less would have to be given to the local exchequer. He moved his Amendment in order to secure from the right hon. Gentleman some information which would satisfy the smaller local authorities that they would not lose by the proposals which the Government now made.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 16, to leave out from the word 'pounds' to end of line 19."—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand pait of the clause."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs) said the hon. Member had moved his Amendment rather with a view to getting a statement from the Government as to the general effect of their proposals, but he hardly thought this was the point at which that statement could most appropriately be made. He thought it would be far better for it to come on the Amendment to omit the whole clause. He would suggest to the hon. Member that it would be better to have one general debate on the whole question later on, for he had asked for an explanation on one small point, and it would be difficult to give that without explaining the whole position.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said that when they got to the discussion on the omission of the clause it would be impossible to move any Amendment of any words in the clause itself, and, therefore, they were barred from raising any question, whilst if they got the information he desired now they would be able possibly to obtain some Amendment of the clause. Discussion became purely academic if they reserved it until the Motion for the omission of the whole clause.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he would point out that there were only two points: first, whether it was desirable to transfer the collection to the local authorities at all, and secondly, if they decided in favour of that, whether the amount paid by the Exchequer was adequate for the purpose. Neither of those two points could be raised by way of Amendment except by the excision of the whole clause, and therefore he thought it was far better to take the debate on the Motion of the hon. Member for Rye. The effect of the present Amendment would be that no provision at all would be made for the distribution among the county councils, and that this sum would simply accumulate to the Local Taxation Account, which could not be the object of the hon. Member.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) asked how they were to raise any points that might arise after they had got the right hon. Gentleman's answer on the question. There was one very material point with regard to Clause 6, in the first part of which Section 17 of the Finance Act, 1907, ceased to apply to these licences, and that section included a guarantee.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see that that arises on this question.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER said he only wished to show that they could not discuss this question at all if they were dealing with the omission of the clause alone.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE thought the hon. Member had shown that his suggestion was the best, because he started criticising on this Amendment something which they had already passed.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the questions of principle in this clause were the question of the transference, and the question of the amount, and those two subjects could only arise on the Motion for the omission of the clause, but that was why he took this opportunity of bringing forward a particular grievance on the part of the smaller local authorities, who thought that the proposals of the Government were not sufficient to cover the cost. He wished to keep this question apart from the general discussion on the clause.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) said there were two subsidiary questions which they wished to raise apart from the big question which would naturally be raised by the Motion for the rejection of the whole clause. He quite agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was not desirable that they should mix up the big question of whether this change should be made at all with the subsidiary question of whether, if it was done, it should be done in the particular manner proposed, and he suggested, in agreement with what the right hon. Gentleman had said, that they should leave the main question for general discussion on the Motion of the hon. Member for Sussex. Assuming that this change was to be made, was the distribution of the payment fair, not as between the Exchequer on the one hand and all local authorities on the other, but as between one local authority and another? Amongst the smaller authorities the amount collected would be relatively inconsiderable. It seemed to him that the point of his hon. friend still remained that remuneration in proportion to the amount collected was not necessarily in proportion to the expense incurred. He did not quite know what language to use to express the function of the local authorities in this matter, but they were to be a sort of watchman. They had to ascertain who had not paid and then take steps to make them pay. It was true that the money would be collected by the Post Office, but the work of seeing that those who ought to pay did pay and inquiring who should have paid was not indicated by the amount collected. That seemed to him to be a contention of substance, and he asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with it on this Amendment. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he was as anxious as he was not to have two discussions and to keep this small point apart from the larger question.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was in the hands of the Committee. He was prepared to take the subsidiary question at once if they wished.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked whether it would be inconvenient to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain the precise functions of the Post Office at that stage.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he would take the Leader of the Opposition as interpreting the views of the Committee in the matter. Nothing was further from the intention of the Government than that the local authorities should be called upon to set up new machinery for collection. If they had to do that, £40,000 would obviously be very inadequate. First of all, the Revenue authorities would print the necessary notices to persons they believed to be liable. These notices would be distributed by the local authority, but the money would be collected by the local post office. There was no idea of the local authorities appointing Revenue officials for the purpose of going from door to door to collect dog and game licences. The holders of such licences would call at the local post office and pay their licences. A certain number of people would try to evade payment, and that was where the function of the local authority came in. They had much more effective machinery at their disposal for dealing with this matter than had the Revenue officials. The police knew every man who had a dog, gun, or carriage, and evidence was already very largely given by police officers in prosecutions of this kind and at the present moment they were largely dependent upon the police for information of this kind.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As regards old-age pensions as well?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No; but he had had enough of old-age pensions for a while. The police supplied this information now. Whenever the police discovered that a person had a dog or went out shooting they gave information to the Excise officer, the police undertook the prosecution, and the evidence was very often given by the police officer himself. So far from the local authorities losing in regard to this work, he thought they would gain considerably. The functions transferred to the local authorities were not very onerous, and they would not be very costly, so far as administration was concerned. They would send out notices printed by the Revenue authorities, book-keeping and collection being done by the Post Office, and the distribution of the £40,000 carried out by the Local Government Board upon a certificate from the Revenue as to the amount collected. It was said that the amount collected was not always a satisfactory criterion to take. But one must have a rough-and-ready test in cases of this kind, and he did not see what better test could be substituted for that which was now proposed. The local authorities were being liberally treated. The entire cost of collection was now on the Revenue authorities, and amounted to 2½ per cent. In future at least half the burden and labour of distribution would be borne by the Imperial authorities, especially the Post Office, and still the local authorities would be paid exactly what the Government were now paying for collection.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked whether the Post Office authorities would transmit the notices free of charge as was done now.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the position at the present moment was that the notices must be stamped, but communications were taking place on that subject. The matter was a serious one, but he thought there was sufficient margin to cover it. The local authorities, in his opinion, stood to gain under the new arrangement. They would not be put to a cost of more than £40,000. The change, however, must necessarily be an experiment as far as expenditure was concerned, and if necessary the local authorities could make representations to the Treasury when the results became known. The collection would certainly be more thorough than at present, because the local authorities had in a special degree local knowledge and machinery at their service, and besides that he thought the local authorities stood to make a very considerable profit out of it. A deputation waited upon him the other day from the County Councils Association and the municipal corporations, and they discussed matters very fully. The members of the deputation asked most searching questions as to the method of administration. He thought he could say that they went away satisfied that the new arrangement would work well, and that there would be no loss to the local authorities. As a matter of fact, from the purely financial point of view, the local authorities would benefit. There was one case where the cost of collection of their own local revenue was about 10s. per cent. He agreed that that was not altogether a test if they had one man paying on behalf of the whole lot. There were discounts given in some cases in order to facilitate collection. But there was a considerable margin between ½ and 2½ per cent. They recognised that they could not collect these assessed taxes as cheaply as local rates, and they were allowing a considerable margin on that account. He thought it would be found that they were making a fair bargain, and that the view of the Government was on the whole a generous one to the local authorities. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman opposite desired to take this opportunity of raising the general question of principle. If he did, he thought he could anticipate what the right hon. Gentleman would say. If he did not mean to take this opportunity of discussing the general principle, he would be satisfied for the moment with making this explanation of the method of collection and distribution.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was a very interesting one and raised points which probably had not occurred to many of them. Certainly the question of the division between the revenue and the county councils was one of a somewhat complicated character, and no doubt it would be possible to discuss it on the clause as a whole with greater advantage than on this Amendment. He did not think that the explanation which the right hon. Gentleman had given altogether met the point he desired to raise, because he had not really dealt with the question of how far as between the local authorities themselves it was fair to allocate money. If they merely gave a percentage on the amount levied, it would be an encouragement to those who received the larger amount of money to put pressure on their district as against the smaller local authorities. It should be remembered that these taxes were in respect of luxuries. They were levied on persons who had establishments in London and in different parts of the country, and it was quite possible that under the percentage arrangement on the amount actually levied there would be great competition between the county councils, and that those which were better organised would be able to get larger sums than the smaller ones which were not in the same fortunate circumstances. It was all very well to say that it was automatically collected, but they knew that a great part of it would have to be collected by inquisition, especially in regard to dog, gun, and game licences. He did not know whether this matter had been discussed by the deputation to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. He still thought that it would have been better to have given some margin in this matter instead of laying it down so definitely. In view of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman had evidently made up his mind thoroughly on the question, he asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) thought there was on the face of things a slight disadvantage to the counties as compared with the towns in this matter of collection, because in the towns it would be more convenient and less expensive to collect these various duties. A borough policeman, for instance, in going his nightly round would be able to see a dog standing on a doorstep, and would not have to spend any extra time, whereas in the country if a policeman had to do this duty he would have to spend a considerable amount of extra time in finding out the various people who possessed dogs, guns, and carriages. It would be the policeman's duty, for instance, to go to shooting parties and make inquiries with regard to game and dog licences. He dared say the policeman would enjoy spending his time in that way; but he did not think it would be a good thing for the local authority. It would surely mean that the Standing Joint Committee would have to pay more to the policemen in their districts for the collection of these duties than would have to be paid by the borough authorities for the collection of the duties in their areas. That meant that there might be the possibility of loss to the counties as compared with the boroughs.

Amendment by leave, withdrawn.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY moved to leave out the proviso "that if the rate of any such duty is altered, that duty shall, unless Parliament makes provision to the contrary, cease to be a duty to which this section applies." He thought it was better that these matters should be left to be dealt with at the time. He thought that it would be rather a hard matter if, by the action of the Government in raising or lowering any one of these licences, it was to be automatically removed from the new arrangement with the local authority. He thought the Government ought to come back to Parliament and explain why they wished the duty to be raised or lowered, so that the local authority would have an opportunity of knowing the reason for the Government's altering the bargain made with them. If a tax was raised or lowered, that would at once remove it from the category of a transferred tax. If the dog licences were taken away in that manner, it would mean the taking away of more than a third of the money which came to the local authority. That would upset the whole arrangement, and if this proviso was passed, the local authority would have no say in the matter. They would be left with their organisation, though there would be a large diminution in the money they now received. It was far better that these changes should not come automatically into effect, but that they should form parts of future Finance Bills.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, to leave out lines 25 and 27 inclusive—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) asked what was to happen in the case of an increase of duties. The proviso would imply that if there was any alteration in the duties they would cease to be duties to which the section applied. Last year when similar clauses were considered, the Chancellor of the Exchequer took back into his own control the various licences under Section 17 of last year's Act, and he gave a guarantee to the Municipal Corporations Association and the County Councils Association that any action of his in altering the duties should not diminish the net amount receivable by the municipalities and county councils. They were grateful to him for that, and they slept in peace. It seemed to him that under this proviso the guarantee would now be withdrawn. [AN HON. MEMBER: "No."] He would be glad to have an assurance to the contrary, because as the proviso stood he thought the guarantee would be withdrawn. If duties were reduced the counties and the municipalities would receive less, but if they were increased the whole of the increase would go into the Exchequer. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would add words which would make it perfectly clear that the guarantee to which he had referred was not taken away.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the words were inserted purely in order to revive the guarantee and the pledge of last year. The pledge was that the proceeds of the present duties would be made payable to the local authorities. Supposing the duties were doubled the proceeds would enure to the Exchequer, but would be sent down to the county councils and municipalities.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER said that the guarantee was that the proceeds would enure to the Exchequer, but that the county councils and the municipalities should not receive less under the circumstances than the average of three years.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that in fact they received more. The same thing happened under this proviso as under the Act of last year. If the duties were doubled the proceeds would go to the Exchequer, but would go down afterwards to the local authorities. The only difference from the old system was in the collection. There was the guarantee still, but whether it was dog, carriage, or motor-car licence, Parliament would have the right to allocate the proceeds to the Exchequer or to make arrangements with the local authorities. It was not assumed that any increase would necessarily go to the local authorities, but when the time came for any real increase of the duties the position of the local authorities would be considered. That would be the case under any tax. The amount at present allocated to the local authorities could not be withdrawn without altering this proviso, and the position of the local authorities was not damaged by the proviso. It was a purely drafting proviso rendered necessary in order to continue the guarantee given last year.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: What if the duties were lower than last year?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I would say that that was very improbable, having regard to all the circumstances. Before they could lower any of these duties they would have to come to Parliament and to the local authorities. It would be very difficult to carry anything through Parliament which would deprive the local authorities of any sums without giving them some compensatory amount.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said he recognised the intention of the Government in this matter, but he could not quite see how the proviso carried out that intention as expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The proviso said that if "the rate of any such duty is altered, that duty shall, unless Parliament makes provision to the contrary, cease to be a duty to which the section applies." The section applied to duties to be levied by the local authorities, but there was nothing in the proviso to say that the duties not levied by the local authorities were to be paid to the local authorities, and so far as he could see the proviso did not convey what had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the proviso only referred to the provisions contained in the Act of last year.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said that as the right hon. Gentleman was only restoring the position of last year, and as there could be no loss to the local authorities, he begged leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question proposed, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said that the explanations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had cleared up one or two points; but there was good reason why this clause should be deleted from the Finance Bill. He contended that the machinery which would have to be set up by the county councils would be exceedingly costly. Very little could be advanced in favour of the clause. It was a device to maintain machinery for carrying out the old-age pension scheme which the Act itself did not provide. They imposed on the local authorities, instead of leaving them to the Excise officials, the duties of collection. He would not find much fault with the idea if there was any reasonable probability that the work to be done by any county would be more or less constant. There was no assurance of the kind. In certain districts a certain kind of tax preponderated very largely, and the right hon. Gentleman had hinted that he might have to increase the sum of those duties next year. But when the present or any other Government raised those duties the whole thing would be immediately changed, and the work of collection might be taken out of the hands of the local authorities. The proportion paid out of the £40,000 to any particular authority would vary immensely, and whilst some would gain others would lose. Machinery would have to be set up, because the county councils could not carry out these duties with the staffs they had at present, and it was possible that that machinery would be unnecessarily large and costly. At all events, the uncertainty which existed from year to year was sufficient reason for asking the Government to find some other method of carrying out their scheme. Under the clause the Government of the day would find their hands tied. They might want to increase the duties in any particular direction, and they would then find that either they had to set up machinery or else lose the revenue they might derive. He thought it would be far better for the Government rather than the county councils to set up the necessary machinery. They would have to do so in the long run, and they might just as well do so at once. Surely the right hon. Gentleman could do it through the post office just as well. It would be far more desirable than the hybrid scheme at present contemplated. He hoped the clause would be deleted.

Mr. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why, since this transfer was a good thing, from the point of view of the local authorities of this country, it was not extended to the local authorities of Ireland. They had county councils in Ireland, and in one concrete instance with which he was personally acquainted this was a serious matter. The machinery of local taxation in its relation to the Exchequer and Exchequer Grants to the objects of local authorities was very complicated, and the only thing of which he was sure was that local taxation in Ireland was like the hand of providence—very heavy and hard to avoid. There were certain taxes allocated to the relief of local taxation, and one very important tax in that section which had a place in the inventory of the English Local Government Act had no place in the Irish Local Government Act. That tax was the carriage tax. In this country it went to the local authorities in the cities as well as to the county councils. In the city of Dublin the carriage tax yielded every year between £3,000 and £4,000, but not a penny of that went to the local authority, nor did they get any grant equivalent to it. That tax went directly to the maintenance of the police. It was collected by the police and retained by them. The county councils in Ireland were obliged to maintain the roads, but they got no carriage tax or equivalent grant. It was that tax to which he wished particularly to call attention. There was also the question of the grant of £40,000. That grant on the right hon. Gentleman's own showing would more than pay for the cost of the collection. It would give a bonus to the local authorities of this country, and what he wished to know was when the right hon. Gentleman was going to extend the advantage of a similar bonus to Ireland. He was well aware that Royal Commissions were not regarded by the House as of much account, but there was a very valuable Report of a Royal Commission which in 1902 investigated the subject of local taxation in the three countries England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. The unanimous recommendation of that Report was that substantially the machinery of local government with regard to the relation of the local authorities in Ireland to the Exchequer was the same as in Great Britain. They recommended, therefore, that no change of this kind should be made in Great Britain without being extended, as far as possible, to Ireland. There was no Amendment on the Paper, and possibly the right hon. Gentleman with the pressure upon him of old-age pensions, had not had much time to consider the question of Irish local taxation, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give his attention to the matter, and next year give to the Irish local authorities the same privileges which local authorities in this country enjoyed.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN was not quite certain that the hon. Gentleman who spoke last was right in his belief that any advantages were derived by the local authorities in England from the functions now under discussion. It was quite certain that the Government were not doing this out of love for the local authorities. The Government had been singularly inconsequential in the matter. Last year, with a flourish of trumpets, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, the present Prime Minister, undertook to make a change in his Budget, by which all receipts from these taxes should be paid directly into the Exchequer, by which means the right hon. Gentleman suggested that a more accurate knowledge of the sum received from such taxation would be obtained, and the accounts synchronised. So far as it went, no doubt that was a good thing. But the Government having done that, and taken credit for it, set to work this year to undo that arrangement, with the result that the accounts instead of being simplified, had been rather elaborated, and a greater expense incurred. Because in order to get the local authorities to collect these taxes and keep them, the Government had to give them something more. It was true that the Post Office had to encash the money, but the local authority was to be the active agent in seeing that the debtors paid, and in order to persuade the local authorities to carry out these functions, they were to be paid rather more than the taxes would cost to collect. Therefore it was not so economical. All this showed that it was not a good change. The Government did not contend that the change was desirable in itself, or one which they would have made for its own sake; it had been made for the purpose of setting free the revenue officers for the pensions scheme. They would never have attempted it if it had not been that they desired to set free these officers. Against the Inland Revenue officer as an Inland Revenue officer, he had not a word to say; he did his work well, but he did not think that the position of an Inland Revenue officer in the town in which he resided qualified him to be an officer to administrate the Old-age Pensions Bill. The Government did not pretend that the Inland Revenue officer had been chosen because he was fitted for that purpose. They chose him because they were unable to find anybody else to do the work. The Poor Law Commissioners were soon to report. What the Report would recommend no one knew, but the common expectation was that they would recommend a thorough overhauling of the Poor Law Administration, and the people carrying out that administration would very likely be changed considerably. It might be that if that arose, the very organisation which the Government required to carry out the pension scheme would be found there. That was his objection to this clause. It was a clause to meet a temporary difficulty, and it was not desirable that it should be made permanent. He suggested, therefore, that the clause should be postponed until the Poor Law Commissioners' Report was issued and they knew who would be the new authority. Under the circumstances if the hon. Gentleman went to a division he would follow him into the lobby.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) thought none would deny that the Government had kept their secret remarkably well, but if any Member had a doubt as to what was the meaning of this clause the notices which some of them had received from county councils throughout the country would have enlightened them. He had received one from the West Riding County Council which said many hard things, but he frankly admitted that if they had heard the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer they would not have said such hard things about his proposal as they had done. Everyone would admit that it was difficult on the spur of the moment for them to say what would be the effect of such a proposal and whether it should be approved or not, but one very strong objection to it last year was pointed out. They had a distinct guarantee given that these revenues would be secured to the local authorities, and now, not only did there seem to be some question on the matter, but there appeared to be a considerable burden of work thrown on the county councils to collect these revenues, which work did not exist in the past. He maintained that the county councils had got all and more than they could do, and it was a great mistake that any extra work of this kind should be thrown upon them. The new procedure was at best a very complicated matter. They had circulars printed by the Government, distributed by local authorities, and collected by the Post Office. The right hon. Gentleman had not told them what was going to be the cost of sending out these circulars or who was going to defray it, and the expense was likely to be considerable. Another point was that the police were not the servants of the county councils. They did a certain amount of duty, especially in the rural districts, but there were districts where a certain amount of friction existed between the Standing Joint Committee and the County Council, and that might be a strong reason why duties of this kind should not be thrown upon a county council. It seemed to him far better that the Government should increase the number of Excise officers and continue the existing system, which had worked very satisfactorily in the past, and about which no complaint had been made. He could not see that the right hon. Gentleman had given any sufficient reason for their supporting the clause, and he should certainly vote against it. The proportion which the West Riding would receive from the £40,000 was about £1,500, and he would be very much surprised to find that these licences could be collected in that enormous area with its enormous population, and its many authorities, for the sum of £1,500. He hoped that it might turn out to be so, but the whole case of the county councils in connection with this proposal must rest mainly on the question of cost. If the right hon. Gentleman could prove that the cost would not be in excess of the sum allowed, their opposition to the proposal would disappear; but if the new proposal involved a loss to the county councils then he hoped that loss would be recouped to them.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that although this clause did not apply to Scotland, yet the principle which it embodied in regard to levying certain duties would be viewed there with some interest. They had just heard that a third of the motor cars were registered in London, but a very large proportion of those cars before long would be careering along the highways of his native land doing a considerable amount of damage to the roadways. What he was a little concerned about in view of the provision of this clause was that where the local authorities were accustomed to collect this duty and to receive the benefit of it, it would be much more difficult to effect a further redistribution of the taxes levied on motor cars in fair proportion to the damage that they did to the highways throughout the country. He would like to see that subject dealt with before the provisions of the clause were extended to the local authorities. There were two questions to be considered in the matter. One was that these cars paid an amount which seemed very insufficient, and the other was as to the redistribution of the receipts from the tax. He thought that that point was prejudiced by the clause, and unless he could obtain some assurance on the point, he should vote against it. He would again point out that though the greater proportion of the tax on motor cars was levied in England, the larger proportion of the damage was done to the highways of Scotland.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said that the new scheme to which the clause under discussion related was confined to England alone, and he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it was not applied to Scotland because of any difference which existed in the allocation and distribution of the tax, which was collected by the Excise authorities at present. In regard to the sum now being voted to the English county councils to undertake this work, naturally the Scottish authorities would desire to share in it if any advantage would be gained by it. Was it impossible to apply the clause to Scotland because, as a matter of fact, in this country, the share placed to local taxation was distributed under the Act of 1889 in certain proportions according to rateable value and so forth, and therefore the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not apply the new system which apparently he would apply in England? Was that the reason for not having included Scotland, and under the circumstances was any alteration to be made in the position of Scotland?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE indicated a reply in the negative.

MR. YOUNGER: The right hon. Gentleman shook his head, and he might assume that there was to be no alteration with regard to Scotland.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said he was not enamoured of the clause; still, he did not take up the hostile attitude towards it that he had done before the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on the front bench. A week or two ago the municipalities had assumed a strongly hostile position in reference to the proposal, but since the Chancellor of the Exchequer had met a deputation from them, and in his eloquent way had induced them to believe that they were going to make money out of the change, their hostility had not been so great. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would excuse him if he said, as one with some fifteen years experience of borough council work, that he did not entertain any great hope as to what the municipal authorities would gain as a result of the change. To his mind the £40,000 would not cover the increased cost to the ratepayers of the country. He felt quite convinced of that. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, of course, had stated that the municipalities were not going to be compelled to collect the whole of these taxes; but at their meeting in London they were under the impression that they had to do the whole of the collecting work. That impression, however, was now removed. Still they would have to issue the notices, and when all that had been done, they had, through the police, to find out the defaulters. His experience of municipal work was that if they got any additional work whatever they could not get it done without having an official or two extra. It was always used as an excuse for getting an increased staff, and he felt as certain as he stood there that as soon as the Bill was passed every municipality in the land would increase its staff in order to carry out the provisions of the measure. He did not say that it ought to be so; he thought it ought not to be so; he was only stating what followed from an Act of Parliament of this character. He could see the chief constable walking into the meeting room of the watch committee and speaking of the large amount of work devolved upon the force in order to catch delinquents, which the Act said they had to do, and it would be asked that addition should be made to the police force up and down the country. In view of these circumstances he thought £40,000 was not sufficient. The work was being performed now, but he rather gathered from what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, and from remarks which had fallen from Members above the gangway, that it was not being performed efficiently. They were going to bring in men who were not accustomed to it, and to his mind that would tend to increase the cost. He could not, however, after having heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer, go to the extreme point of saying that he would go into the division lobby for the deletion of the clause.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY thought the Committee were entitled to know what was the object of the proposed change. He thought it made a considerable difference whether the object was really to set free the Excise officers for the work of old-age pensions, or whether it was recommended by the Government on its merits, because both propositions required argument. If it was recommended to the Committee because it would set free the Excise officers for the work of old-age pensions it seemed to him to be rather a piece of political trickery, because it would then become part of the old-age pension scheme and would be thrown on the rates. The Excise officers at present were paid out of Imperial funds, but when they were taken over by the local authority for the work of old-age pensions, as a matter of fact the burden of investigating claims would be thrown on the rates. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman would admit that to be an incontestable proposition, though of course it would only apply to the extent by which the local authorities exceeded the £40,000 provided under the section. It seemed to him more than probable that that £40,000 would not be nearly enough, especially in thinly populated and scattered districts, where, as the Committee would be well aware, it would be much more difficult and require much more work to get the provisions properly carried out. Another question which he should like to put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the £40,000 was whether in calculating the cost of the work, the expense of issuing the notices had been included. He understood from the remark he made to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Worcestershire that it was not yet decided whether the expense of posting these notices was to be paid by the Imperial Government or by the local authority. It was rather odd that that should be still a matter for negotiation when the £40,000 to be paid to the local authority had been fixed, because it must either have been included in the £40,000, or else, if it had not been thought of and it turned out that that expenditure had to be paid by them the £40,000 obviously could not be an adequate sum. Then the procedure as regarded the post office, about which the right hon. Gentleman satisfied a deputation the other day, seemed rather complicated. As far as he could gather from his answer to the deputation, the money would be paid into the post office and then would be sent from the local post office to the General Post Office and back again to the local authority. He did not quite follow how, if that was going to be done, the local authority was to have any check upon the amount which it received for the General Post Office. They were throwing upon the local authority the responsibility for seeing that the money was properly collected, but giving them no means of checking the amount handed over to them. That was a great drawback to the scheme, and it certainly required explanation. Then there was the question how one local authority was to get information as to licences taken out by persons resident in its area as well as in other areas. It very frequently happened that persons took out their licences in one place and spent a good deal of time in another. There must be some machinery provided by which the local authority, where the licence had not been taken out, could find out whether it had been taken out or not, and there was nothing of the kind provided by the plan of the Government. Further, he was not at all sure that it was very desirable that the function of making people pay and of finding transgressors who had not paid should be thrown upon the police as part of their duty. It was all very well now, when in the course of their ordinary duties they came across cases of licences not being taken out, that they should report them to the Excise authority, but he did not know that that was quite the same thing as making it part of their duty to go on purpose to places and see whether the correct number of licences had been taken out. It threw a rather inquisitorial duty upon the police, which was not very desirable. One had always been led to believe that the police were people with whom law-abiding citizens need not come into contact at all. But under this proposal it would not be so. Everybody, whether he had taken out licences or not, would be liable to visits from police officers at his house, inspecting the number of dogs, carriages, male servants, and so on. It was not a proper function for the police to perform and would make them unpopular. It had been quite effectively performed hitherto by Inland Revenue officers, and he thought it was far better that that duty should remain with them. He understood that notices were to be printed by the Government and issued by the local authority, but the answer to that appeal made by the local authority must be given to a third party, the Post Office. He wondered whether it was contemplated under the Government scheme that when anybody received a notice from the local authority they should be able to make their payment direct to the local authority who issued the notice instead of going to the Post Office, and if they had to pay the Post Office direct how did the local authority know whether the licence had been paid or not? What means were there of communicating between the Post Office and the local authorities? In default of its being shown that this proposal was brought forward on its own merits, quite apart from anything to do with the old-age pensions scheme, he should certainly vote against it.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) said he could quite understand that boroughs were in favour of the clause, but he was not quite so sure about county councils. The county council of Devonshire had passed a very strongly-worded resolution to the effect that they did not consider that the collection of establishment and other licences by local authorities would tend to economy or efficiency, and that there were strong economic and financial reasons against the course proposed to be taken in the clause. They were certainly under the impression that a new staff would have to be set up to collect licences over a large and scattered area, which would entail considerable expense. He thought too the allocation of the £40,000 was not at all fair as between thinly and thickly populated districts, because in the former the cost of collection would be larger. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was satisfied that in thinly populated districts there would be a decrease of the rates, he would be very pleased to vote for the clause, but they ought to have a pledge that if his expectations were not realised, and there was an increase of the rates, it should be altered in next year's Finance Bill.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER said the counties and municipal associations accepted the clause as perfectly correct. They had seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Monday, and under the fascination of his eloquence they gave way at all points. He himself was not present, and whilst he felt in some difficulty in raising any doubts about the clause, yet one could not help feeling that it was difficult to see how this would profit the boroughs and the counties. The right hon. Gentleman had mentioned that in the long run it would mean a considerable increase of revenue and that they might even make a profit upon the collection. It was very flattering to municipalities and to counties that they should be able to conduct their business on such excellent principles and in such a way that, whereas the cost was 2½ per cent. to the Treasury, when it came to municipalities they were to do much the same thing and to make a profit on the transaction. It looked as if at any rate one body conducted its business considerably better than the other. It was mentioned that the portion appertaining to Liverpool and Manchester would be about £380. There were about 24,000 dogs in Liverpool, and it would cost £100 in postage alone to apply for licences for these dogs, if everybody paid the moment he got his application. If second or third applications were required the balance of the £385 would become very small. The addition to the police force that would be entailed had been alluded to. As Chairman of the Finance Committee of the City Council, nothing distressed him more than the enormous addition to the police force which was going on every day in consequence of Acts passed by Parliament. He had not the slightest doubt that this Act would require an immediate addition to the force, and the Chief Constable would come and say that these extra duties needed so many extra police, with so much extra wages and so much extra superannuation. Whatever the 2½ per cent. did it did not provide for extra police. Another objection was that the relations between police and the collectors of these licenses would not altogether be pleasant. At present the licences were imposed from London. Now that they were imposed in the locality and one's own friends and neighbours put police in action to collect them, it would create a bitter feeling between various parties which so far had been avoided. Though the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken away all the sting of the opposition of the representatives of the local authorities, he could not help thinking that the right hon. Gentleman had taken a somewhat sanguine view, and that the clause had not been considered with that close attention to detail which was necessary in a transaction of this sort. He had always felt considerable doubt as to these gifts from the Treasury, for he had never found in all his experience one turn out a profit. They were often told that grants in aid were going to do this, that, and the other, but when they came to make up their accounts at the end of five or six years they invariably found a loss. Although the explanations given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer silenced the objections of the deputation, he was not satisfied that the change would be a profitable one for local authorities. Whilst he should be inclined to vote for this clause after the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman, he was afraid that in the end the local authorities would suffer by the arrangement.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge), said he could not help, when listening to the Chancellor's explanation of the clause, thinking of the old saying, "Why not let well alone?" He knew from personal experience and observation spread over a good many years, that the taxes had been hitherto collected very well, very efficiently, and in as convenient a manner for all parties as, he thought, was possible. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that if he handed over the collection to the local bodies and gave them £40,000 to cover the cost, they would be able to make a considerable profit out of it. They all knew that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be very much in want of money next year, and he could not see why he should not continue to have these duties efficiently discharged as now, and take the profits to himself. He did not know about the borough councils, but the county councils did not wish these new duties to be imposed upon them. They were perfectly prepared to let well alone; and, unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer had some better reason to offer than he had already given for the change he thought he would be very wise to withdraw the clause and let the matter remain on the satisfactory basis on which it had been hitherto. He took it that the right hon. Gentleman proposed the change in connection with the old-age pensions which, thank God, had at last been set on foot in this country. He was sure that the credit which would come to the Exchequer, to the Government, and to this Parliament, for granting that enormous boon to the people of the country would be so great that the Exchequer might very well take to itself any additional expense which might be incurred and not seek to impose it in a sort of underhand way upon the county councils. He would conclude as he began with the old motto, "Let well alone."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said his hon. friend had just explained why the Government made this change. He had given the best answer that could be made to his own speech. The change had been made in order to liberate the Excise officers for the purpose of adminstering the old-age pensions scheme. His hon. friend had not suggested any alternative, and he would like to know what suggestions he had to make as to the best method of adminstering the old-age pensions scheme. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire had said that the decision to transfer the collection of these duties was associated with that scheme. That was no secret, for the Prime Minister explained, when he outlined tho scheme to the House, that it was proposed to transfer these duties to the local authorities, because the Excise officer could not discharge his present functions and at the same time discharge the duties placed on him under the Old-Age Pensions Bill.

*MR. EVERETT: Then get more Excise officers. It is perfectly simple.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the Government did not find it so simple. They had given a good deal of attention to the subject and had acted upon the advice of expert officers. It was easy to appoint officials, but it was not so easy to pay for them. The Committee had treated the matter as if it were a suggestion that had emanated for the first time from the present Government. As a matter of fact, the idea was originated by the Unionist Government of 1886 and was incorporated in their Bill of 1888. It was then contemplated that the collection of these duties should be transferred to the local authorities, and it was to be effected by the simple process of an Order in Council.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN pointed out that the Unionist Government did not carry out the suggestion because the Treasury officials advised them that the thing would not work.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that that was his information in regard to it. There was no more difficult thing to carry out than any reform which involved a reduction of staff. The Government had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived for putting into force what was proposed in 1886 with hardly any protest, and he had heard no real reason why it should not be done. His hon. friend behind him had given a very conservative reason—a reason he would have expected to have come from the other side of the House. It was that they should let well alone. The hon Member for Sunderland had said he was against change——

MR. SUMMERBELL: I said I looked on it with suspicion.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that that was the first time he had noticed suspicion in his hon. friend's atttitude towards changes. There was a very strong reason for making the change at this particular moment. It was in order to secure the entire services of these officers for more important and difficult duties. But that did not mean that there was nothing to be said for the change on its merits. The noble Lord opposite asked whether the proposal was made for the sake of old-age pensions or on its merits. There was nothing inconsistent in the two propositions. Meritorious propositions often took a long time to carry through, and this great reform had been enshrined in an Act of Parliament for twenty or thirty years.

MR. YOUNGER: But the right hon. Gentleman is leaving the *status quo* in Scotland.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not see how that was relevant, because they were not dealing in Scotland with local revenue, and he was not aware that the Local Government Act in Scotland contemplated the change. He was dealing with the case on the assumption that these were purely local revenues, and they were following the precedent set by a previous Unionist Government. They were of opinion that these revenues would be collected better by the local authorities. With regard to the objections taken by the hon. Member for Barnstaple, the County Councils Association came to him the other day, and he then explained the whole method of procedure to them. They were under the impression that they would have to set up machinery, and when it was explained that that was not so they were quite satisfied. The hon. Member for the Everton division of Liverpool had admitted that they were satisfied, although he could not see why they were satisfied. The Member for Leith Burghs was rather concerned about motor-cars. He said English motor-cars tore up the roads in Scotland. They left a good deal of money there, too. But what had that to do with this particular matter? They were not altering the principle of distribution. They were making no difference in Scotland even in the method of collection, and they were making no difference here in the method of distribution. Whatever motor-cars paid to the local authorities now they would pay in future. It might be that they did not pay enough. It might be that it was unfair that licences for motor-cars should be paid in London and go to London revenue, whereas the motor-cars tore up the roads in Surrey. That, however, had nothing to do with this section. Concern had been expressed because the printing of the notices was to be done by one party, they were to be issued by a second, and the revenue was to be collected by a third. As far as collection was concerned, it would be carried out very largely as it was now. The Exciseman did not collect one-tenth of the revenue. Probably 85 per cent. of the money was collected by the Post Office at present. The new machinery, instead of being more complicated, would be much simpler than the old. There was at present collection by the Post Office, there was payment to the Inland Revenue, then a transaction with the Local Government Board, and the Local Government Board sent down a cheque. In future the General Post Office would send a cheque direct to the local authority on the allocation made by the Local Government Board. The local authority would in consequence enjoy the considerable advantage of getting its money sooner. An hon. Member from Ireland wished certain licences to be issued and the money collected by the local authorities. There was not much to be gained by such a change. The Excise officer in Ireland would be able to discharge both the functions of which it was suggested he should be relieved and the duties entrusted to him under the Old-Age Pensions Act. The choice of the Excise Officer as the officer to act under the pension scheme had been criticised. He did not think that was the proper occasion for discussing that point. It had already been decided by the House. Complaint had been made that the Government were casting part of the burden of old-age pensions on the local authorities. The noble Lord who made that complaint seemed to think the Government might have given a few thousands more money. Let it be assumed that the Government ought to have given £50,000 instead of £40,000. The Government were giving six or seven millions out of the Imperial Exchequer, and, on the ground that by this subterfuge they sought to extract a subvention of £10,000 from the local authority, the noble Lord denounced the Government for political trickery. If the Government wanted to make a great raid on local funds surely they might make a better attempt than that. The idea that the Government were attempting to shift their burden by making too hard a bargain with the local authorities was also untenable. The difference was too small and insignificant to admit of such an explanation. The Government were trying to do what was fair between the State and the local authorities. If the proposed arrangement were found to cast a heavier financial burden than had been contemplated on the local authorities, if, as the result of a couple of years working, it was discovered that a considerable additional expense was involved in the creation of new machinery which was not adequately met by the £40,000, he would be prepared for a reconsideration of the matter. After the Government's explanation the representatives of the local authorities admitted that their fears had been removed. In these circumstances, and seeing that the House had already resolved that the Excise officer should be utilised for old-age pensions, he thought the Committee would come to the conclusion that the Government had acted fairly in the course which they had taken.

Mr. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) said that the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer clearly showed the convenience of having Excise officers available for the duties to be imposed upon them in connection with the old-age pensions scheme, but it had done little to satisfy those who were interested in the position of the county councils in relation to the new machinery proposed to be set up. In listening to the debate that afternoon he felt that the more one knew of the proposed machinery the more one was convinced that it would be very cumbersome, and that it would cause inconvenience in administration quite out of proportion to any advantage resulting from having Excise officers to look after old-age pensions. The chief argument which the Committee had heard from the Government was that the local authorities would not have to spend any more money because they would be able to do the work with the police. The hon. Member for Barkston Ash had pointed out that there would be a great deal of friction if that were put in force. He would like to point out the difficulties which would ensue in London where the police were not in any way under the control of the London County Council. He did not know what provision the Home Secretary would propose to meet that difficulty. He did not think the police could serve two masters. Whatever might be the case in the country, he thought that in London very large additional expense would have to be faced in providing officers for the detection of those who were trying to evade their liabilities in this matter. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that 2½ per cent. in addition would be allocated to the local authorities to meet the expenses of collection; but that percentage was founded on the actual cost to the Exchequer. It was quite obvious that the Exchequer could do that kind of work much more cheaply than a local authority, because they did these things on a much larger scale. It could not be expected that county councils and county boroughs could do it as economically as it was done by the Exchequer. The county councils had no staff to do the work. They had no officials to go from house to house to make inquiries and no officers for collecting rates, so that it meant the appointment of an entirely new staff of collectors. The new duties would also require the opening of new offices throughout the country, and that would involve a very large expenditure. Moreover, it would undoubtedly cause great inconvenience to those who had to pay the duties. The hon. Member for Sunderland had raised a laugh by his reference to the way the dog licence was levied, but he had entirely misunderstood the point raised by an hon. Member on that side of the House. The point was that at present people took out their licences in perhaps a different county from that in which their shooting was, and they did not always have their licences in their pockets. Perhaps they might have a motor car licence, a gun licence, a dog licence, and several other licences, and it would be a very great inconvenience always to have to carry them all and fill their pockets with them. He knew that in driving a motor car it was sometimes a great nuisance to carry the licence and a great inconvenience to be asked by the police to show it. At the present time there was a central registry for motor licences; and he knew that every year he got a circular from the Post Office calling attention to the fact that he had taken out a licence the previous year and that he had not done so this year; but if he had taken out a licence somewhere else he need not trouble to answer the letter. In that way a great deal of trouble was saved; but in future the only way the local authority would have of checking whether a licence had been taken out elsewhere would be to plague the licensee to take out the licence. Further, there was no identification to be made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out that the proposed method would be simpler, but he could not see it. Another point was that it was not proposed to take over the whole of the licences. Why should the particular duties mentioned in Clause 6 be singled out to be collected by the local authorities, and the Excise officers be still able to look up liquor licences, auctioneers' licences, pawnbrokers' licences, solicitors' licences, and other licences? If some licences were handed over to the local authorities, why not hand over all? The most objectionable feature, to his mind, was in Clause 4, which provided that this duty of collecting licences might at some future time revert to the central authority. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had referred to some former case in which the local authorities had been willing to take over the duty of collecting certain licences; but at that time there was no proposal that they should take over that duty for a year or two, set up an expensive staff to do it, and that then the duty might be taken away. At the present time, if the staff were set up and the pension right created, the liability for the pension might cease and there would be no work for the staff; or the Chancellor of the Exchequer might alter the system. Again, these proposals must throw an apple of discord into the whole system of local government. At the present time the local authorities were circularising the whole neighbourhood with a view to induce people to take out their licences, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals became law, they would cause an indiscriminate scramble for the spoil. If there was to be a continual demand for licence duties there would be a considerable waste of time in calling upon people to take out their licences in one part of the country and not in another. He should vote against the clause.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said he had always voted for the licences being collected by officers of the Inland Revenue. It might be well done in England, but in Scotland they had harder work than in England, and it would impose still harder work upon them if they were to collect all the licence duties. He was obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his reply with regard to the allocation of the tax on motor cars. At the same time he held that this new machinery would tend to localise the receipts of that tax and therefore his objection to the clause was removed.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said that it had been found difficult for some reason to enforce the Act of 1888. He did not think that it mattered much what was done under the Act of 1888; but, at any rate, it was not necessary that it should be done now. As to Scotland and Ireland, he did not understand what the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant. The question was whether, if an Imperial officer in Scotland could discharge the duties of the Pensions Bill as well as his present duties, why could not an Imperial officer do the same in England or Ireland? There were very few licences in Ireland. Had the existing Imperial officers in Ireland not enough to do? If not, they were overpaid, and the proper course was to reduce their pay—a thing that should have been done some time ago. He, however, did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant that. The broad point he put was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he was going to pay the county councils £40,000 a year in order to do a certain amount of work at present done by the Inland Revenue officers, and, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman thought it cheaper to pay that £40,000 than to appoint new officers to do the work. That was the whole basis of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme. Was it not perfectly plain that, if new work was placed on the local authorities, sooner or later they would have to appoint new men to do it? It was not worthy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say to the local authorities: "You can get this work done by people you already employ," when he knew that the county councils would have to appoint new people. In urban areas fresh work could not be thrown on policemen.

They would have to appoint fresh officers or pay the existing officers something extra. It really came to this—that to carry out the work a fresh staff would have to be appointed; and why could a fresh staff appointed for the purpose be a more economical way of doing the duty? Why should not the existing staff of the Government do the work? They would be merely performing the same kind of duty which they at present discharged. And why should not all the licence duties be collected by the one hand? If it were necessary to have in some way or another a large number of people employed by the Inland Revenue Department in order to discharge the duties under the Old-Age Pensions Scheme, why not appoint them at once? They would not in the end save any money; they would be merely transferring the burden from the central authority to the local authority. In these circumstances, he thought the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were very unbusiness-like, and if his hon. friend went to a division he would vote with him.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes) said he could not admit that his dislike to this clause had been modified by what had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman's proposals were not fair to the county councils. The right course to take was to appoint additional Excise officers to do the work. He thought that the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that policemen should be employed to discharge these duties was unworkable. It had this great draw-back, that the police were not the servants of the county councils, but of the Standing Joint Committee, though they were paid by the county council. The proposed new machinery would, he believed, inevitably be found in practice to be very cumbrous. The county council would receive the produce of the licences, but all the inspectorial work would be carried out by the police, who were not the servants of the body to whom the money went. Some hon. Members had referred to shooting licences. He, in common, he supposed, with many other Members of that House, sometimes found himself well into the shooting season without a licence. Under the present condition he got a reminder from the Inland Revenue and the licence was taken up, but under this Bill who was to know whether he had taken out a licence or not? The only people who could possibly know were the police, who were not the servants of the county council in any way. Further, who was going to pay in future the costs of any prosecution which might be instituted for not taking out a licence? In the past that had been done by the Inland Revenue authorities. He supposed under this Bill it would be done by the county council. He did not refer to the small prosecutions, such as proceeding against a man for keeping two dogs with only one licence or anything of that kind. He referred to those important test cases that arose from time to time. He had in view a case which was brought a few years ago by the Inland Revenue authorities against the owner of a large estate with respect to a number of under gardeners. The Inland Revenue contended that these men were taxable servants. The owner of the estate contended that they were only labourers and that no licence was necessary. That case was fought out, counsel were employed on both sides, and great expense was incurred. He contended that cases of that kind should be undertaken by the Inland Revenue, and that the onus of taking such proceedings should not rest upon the local authorities. He gathered that such expense would not be covered by the 2½ per cent. to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. On all these grounds he disliked this change exceedingly, and should vote against it.

MR. HICKS BEACH desired to emphasise the objections to this change which had been raised by hon. Members, especially when it was made only to relieve the Excise officers of their present duties in order that they might undertake the duties of pension officers. Surely the simplest way if these men were required for the purposes of administering the pension fund would be not to relieve them of these duties, but to give them a little clerical assistance. The notices which they had to send out now could easily be sent out by a youth who had just left school, and of that part of their duty these officers could be relieved. That was a much simpler plan of relieving them than to place the duties on the county council who did not desire to undertake them. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the county councils would make a very good thing out of it. That was a singular argument for a Chancellor of the Exchequer t advance, because his primary duty was to look after the interests of the taxpayer and of the Treasury, and the fact that the county councils were going to make a good thing out of the £40,000 showed that the right hon. Gentleman must have given them more money than was necessary for the purpose of collecting the licences. With regard to the distribution of the money between the borough councils and county councils, he pointed out that it would cost the borough authority considerably less to collect the licences than the county authorities who had large and sparsely populated districts to cover. He hoped, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman would give some assurance that the county authorities would receive the same fair proportion of the £40,000 as the borough authorities got for collecting the licences in small densely populated areas. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the fact that a Unionist Government passed a clause in the Bill of 1886 under which the Government by an Order in Council could give the local authorities the right to collect these taxes, and had said it was clear that the local authorities wished to have that right at that time. If they did, they did not wish for it long, because it had never been carried into effect. It was not carried into effect because the Inland Revenue authorities conclusively showed that if the duties were collected by the local authorities a great deal of inconvenience would be caused. It had also to be remembered that under the Act of 1886 if the duties on the various Excise licences were increased in amount the revenue then gained was to go to the local authorities and not to the Exchequer, and no doubt the county councils at that time, with the hope of getting some relief out of the taxes, would have taken over the collection of the licences. But now that the Government had taken into their own hands any revenue that might be obtained from an increase in the duties the county councils had no desire to undertake their collection.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR thought they had heard for the first time that day that in future the Inland Revenue officer would no longer have anything to do with Inland Revenue, but would be occupied with duties connected with inland expenditure. It was in connection with that new position that he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman one question. The Inland Revenue officer was no longer, as he understood, to have anything to do with the Treasury in the same way as before. He understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the whole time of the Inland Revenue officers would be applied—he certainly thought they would be required—to duties connected with the Government's scheme of old-age pensions. If that was so, who was to be their official chief? Were they still to be the servants of a board whose whole duty was dealing with public Revenue? Were these gentlemen who were to have nothing to do except to manage this pensions scheme to be under the control of the Chairman of the Excise and Customs Board? The eminent persons who presided over our Customs and Inland Revenue would know nothing about conducting inquiries into qualifications for old-age pensions. He did not understand that any change was going to be made in their duties. He did not understand that the Government were going to ask the Chairman of the Customs Board to qualify himself for that duty, and, therefore, he would not be qualified to judge as to whether these officers were carrying out their new duties properly. The result was that these gentlemen would be engaged in duties of which their superior official would know nothing, and in regard to which they were not expected to know anything. The real chief of the local so-called Inland Revenue officers would not be the Board of Inland Revenue but the President of the Local Government Board, because the head of the Local Government Board would be the only person high up in the official hierarchy who had any opportunity of knowing whether they satisfactorily performed their duties in connection with old-age pensions. Their nominal chiefs would be absolutely divorced from any knowledge of how they did their work in regard to old-age pensions. This seemed to be an arrangement for which there was no justification, which was quite outside any precedents which could be quoted by the Government, and entirely contrary to common sense. Surely the superior officers of these men should have an opportunity of knowing how their duties were carried out, and should be expected to qualify themselves to judge. The Government were going to cut the Inland Revenue service into two and hand over a great part of a popular service to the Local Government Board, who would have no hierarchical authority over them, but yet the President of which was the only person who could say whether they were performing their duties in the manner required of them by Parliament. This was the first opportunity that Parliament had had of hearing how the right hon. Gentleman was going to construct this branch of the Civil Service, and he would be glad to have some further explanation on that point.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that he certainly did not mean to convey there would be no more Inland Revenue officers. Of course, there would still be Inland Revenue officers who would be charged with the collection of an enormous amount of revenue. Publicans' licences, the licences of tobacco dealers, pawnbrokers' licences, plate-dealers' licences, and other licences, would be collected by the Excise officers. The right hon. Gentleman had reverted to the criticism or complaint at their having chosen these particular revenue officers for the purpose of inquiring into claims for old-age pensions. He thought that was hardly the opportunity for debating that point. It was a matter which the House of Commons had already decided, and it had approved of the plan of the Government. Therefore, he did not think it was a desirable course to resume discussion on that particular question. It had been decided, for better or for worse, so far as the House of Commons was concerned. But there was one criticism made by the right hon. Gentleman in the course of his arguments which was perhaps more germane to this Bill than to the Old-age Pensions Bill. The right hon. Gentleman suggested, now they were separating the functions of the revenue officer, or rather splitting them in two, that for one purpose he would be the revenue officer, and for the second purpose he would be a Local Government Board officer. That was not so. The officer would still be a Treasury official; he was there to watch for the Treasury; he was there primarily as a Treasury official; and they had chosen him because he was a Treasury officer responsible to that Department. That was the scheme. He wanted the Committee to bear that in mind where the whole burden had been cast upon the Imperial Exchequer. In every other scheme that had been brought forward half or at least one-third was to be borne out of local revenues. Therefore, this scheme was essentially different in character. As long as the local revenue bore a portion of the expenditure there was some check upon it; they appointed a local officer for the purpose, who would see to the extent of one-half or one-third that the expenditure did not increase unduly. But here they had made the burden exclusively an Imperial one, and they must, therefore, have an officer representing the Exchequer. There the Excise officer was, still representing the Exchequer, still representing the Treasury, which, after all, was responsible for those officers. The point was as to Parliamentary responsibility. The Excise officer would be responsibile to the Inland Revenue, the Inland Revenue would be responsible to the Treasury, and the Treasury would answer to the House of Commons in respect of anything that happened with regard to these particular officers. To that extent the Excise officer chosen for this work was still a Treasury officer, and was not at all responsible to the Local Government Board. The only function of the Local Government Board in the matter was as a Court of Appeal on disputed points. The officer was not responsible to them at all. They sat in judgment on him in respect of issues arising out of the administration of the

Act, but he took his directions not from the Local Government Board but from the Treasury, and, therefore, he was still a Treasury officer.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said it was really an important point, and he did not think they had yet had it quite defined. The reason he had said that these officers were officials of the Local Government Board was because it was only that Department which had an opportunity of supervising their work and seeing that it was efficiently carried out. It was true that the Board of Ireland Revenue and the Customs were under the Treasury, but both were technical expert Boards who dealt with very difficult revenue questions connected either with Customs or Excise, the yield of taxes and the collection of taxes. These gentlemen were the superiors and only superiors of these Excise officers, who were now, however, to deal with old-age pensions. If these superior officers had no knowledge of old-age pensions work, how could it be expected that, as part of their functions, they would know anything about the methods or procedure which should be adopted by those who had charge of the old-age pension work? It was no answer to say that the Treasury were responsible. The Treasury had no means of seeing the persons who carried out these duties in regard to old-age pensions.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I do not see that the relation between the Local Government Board and these officers as regards old-age pensions has anything whatever to do with this clause. I was out of the Committee a short time recently and do not understand how we have got on to this point.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he certainly would not pursue the subject. How they had got on to it was in this way. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, almost necessarily, after the way the debate had gone, had to discuss how these officers would have to deal partly with revenue and partly with old-age pensions, and in discussing the position of these officers in relation to the collection of revenue, it was very difficult to keep their new *status* outside. But he had already made his point, such as it was, quite clear.

MR. COURTHOPE said there was one important point on which he would like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question. It had reference to the duty, now performed by Inland Revenue officers, of preparing agricultural statistics. He believed it was a very irksome and very heavy duty. Would it be carried out by these officers?

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the point as to what arrangement would be made between two local authorities where a person under one of them took out his licence under the other. How were they to know?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE replied that there would be no difference. If the money was paid in a particular town the money went there. If there was a grievance, they had nothing to do with it. They did not alter the system.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Do you write to the Postmaster-General in St. Martin's-le-Grand?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the Post Office weekly or monthly informed the local authorities who had taken out licences.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that at the present moment these licences were collected by the officers of the Central Government, and the service of every office was the same. But when they joined the local authority, how, when a man in Birmingham said he had taken out his licence in London, or, being in London, that he had taken it out in Birmingham, was the local authority to satisfy itself of the truth of the statement?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the local authority would communicate with the district where the licence was taken out.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the right hon. Gentleman now suggested that the local authority was to hunt up a man who had taken out his licence elsewhere, and call upon him to produce it—which meant a house to house visitation for the purpose; or they were to make inquiry of another local authority, thus being forced into a correspondence which he did not think either practicable or beneficial.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 299; Noes, 86. (Division List No. 193.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Crae, Sir George
M‘Kean, John
M‘Killop, W.
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen's Co
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas

Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Rainy, A. Rolland
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick. B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES

Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (Montgomery Co)
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Hill, Sir Clement
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sears, J. E.
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Whitbread, Howard
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Courthope and Viscount Helmsley.

Clause 7:

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) moved to substitute 11d. for 1s. as the income-tax for the present financial year. He saw that when the advance was made in the tax for the purposes of the war the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the income-taxpayer ought to be the first to receive relief when the war was concluded. The war had been over about six years, and the only relief was that given last year to those who earned incomes under £2,000 a year, amounting to £1,250,000 out of a total of about £32,000,000. In his first Budget in 1906, the present Prime Minister said—

> "In regard to the income-tax, I do not hesitate to associate myself with the declarations of more than one of my predecessors that an income-tax at a uniform rate of 1s. in the £ in a time of peace is impossible to justify and difficult to defend. It is a burden on the trade of the country which, in the long run, affects not only profits but wages, and from the point of view of the nation it is open to the same objection as the continuance at an abnormal figure of the floating debt, namely, that it tends to destroy, or at any rate, contract the most readily available reserve on which the State can draw in a sudden or unforeseen emergency.'

The Prime Minister put it very clearly that it was not only a tax upon profits, but, ultimately, a tax on the working people, because profits could not be earned unless wages were paid, and, therefore, if there was less money to invest, the workman himself must really feel the burden. The second reason that the right hon. Gentleman gave, that it must tend to contract the most readily available reserve, was also a very sound financial one. The income-tax was first imposed by Pitt over 100 years ago as a war tax. It continued during the wars with France at a high rate. When the war was over the income-tax dropped, but it was revived again by Sir Robert Peel in 1843. The point was that the income-tax and the Sinking Fund were our two great reserves for emergencies. In order that those two great reserves might be the powerful engine which the late Mr. Gladstone said they ought to be, they must have in times of peace the income-tax at a low or moderate figure, whilst on the other hand they must have the Sinking Fund at a high rate. If they had those two conditions the country was in a safe financial position in case war broke out. Now what did Mr. Gladstone say on this point? He said—

> "Much as might be said of the importance of an Army or a Navy Reserve and having your armoury and arsenals well stored, I say this fiscal reserve is no less important."

With regard to the present year the Prime Minister gave a welcome relief to those deserving people who were earning under £2,000 a year. It was also true that a great many deserving people with small incomes earned in past years received no relief at all. He wished to put in a plea on behalf of those people. It was true that abatements were allowed, but it was also true that the income-tax of 1s. was charged on those incomes. The amount of relief given only to the income-tax payer amounted to £1,240,000 or less than a halfpenny in the £, and as a matter of fact during the last financial year the Chancellor of the Exchequer received in cash as much as £1,880,000 in excess of his Budget estimate of income-tax money. That was actually £780,000 more than the sum paid the year before. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in his Budget statement—

> "Last year I gave a substantial relief to a large number of income-taxpayers; this year, therefore, it would be the natural course for the indirect taxpayer to be relieved."

The right hon. Gentleman had relieved the indirect taxpayer, whether wisely or unwisely, by remitting over one-half of the sugar duty. What he wished to press upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the fact that he thought the Prime Minister, in his Budget statement, was hardly right in his statement that he had really given relief to the income-taxpayer, because he received £780,000 in excess of the receipts of former years. He would like to emphasise another point in connection with direct and indirect taxation, viz., that the death duties were really an income-tax paid out of capital. Let the Committee, for example, take an estate yielding £100 a year. The estate duty would amount to 11d. in the £, extending over the whole life of the person inheriting the money. Therefore, that man had not only to pay income-tax, but he had really to pay estate duty in addition. He would like to draw the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what obtained in this matter in other countries. The fact was that in many of the largest and most important countries in the world there was no income-tax charged at all. The United States of America collected a large amount of money, amounting to £56,000,000, by the Customs duties, but there was not a penny paid in income-tax. There was no income-tax in Russia, nor in Canada. It was true that in France an Income-Tax Bill had been brought before that Chamber, but did the right hon. Gentleman know what had happened to it? The matter was discussed in the French Chamber, and one of the Radical Deputies canvassed his friends to rally to his relief when he moved a Resolution that the French Chamber should sit until that Income-Tax Bill was passed. The Resolution was to the effect—

> "That the Chamber being resolved to carry through the Income-Tax Bill in good time counts on the Government to promote it and prosecute discussion thereon."

A division was taken, and the Members of the French Chamber were so anxious to get away to the country that the Resolution was defeated by 294 votes to 220, and so the Deputies had gone on their holidays and the Income-Tax Bill has been deferred to a more convenient season. There was no income-tax in Belgium or Portugal. There was an income-tax in Germany, but the highest point of 5 per cent. was not reached until incomes amounted to £5,000 a year. In Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway there was a very moderate income-tax charged, and the only two countries where there was an excessive charge in regard to the income-tax were Italy and Spain, where the tax was very high indeed. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider the claims of the income-tax payers of this country, first, on the ground of the promises given to them when the tax was raised from 8d. to 1s. that they should be the first entitled to relief when the war was over; secondly, because the tax was not only a tax upon profit but upon the wages of working people; and lastly, because it was financially a sound policy to keep the income-tax at a reasonable figure, otherwise, in times of war, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find himself in very great difficulties. Compared with all the other countries he had mentioned this country alone had an abnormally large income-tax, which was far higher than the people ought to be called upon to pay. He had much pleasure in moving the Amendment standing in his name.

Amendment proposed—

> "In page 5, line 35, to leave out the words 'one shilling,' and to insert the words 'eleven pence.'"—(*Mr. Samuel Roberts.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'one shilling' stand part of the clause."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the hon. Member had proposed that the Committee should accept an Amendment which would reduce the revenue of the year by £2,500,000. Of course, the Government could not accept that proposal unless the hon. Member was prepared to substitute something else. Was the hon. Member prepared to put another 2d. on tea or put back the sugar duty?

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): There is the coal tax.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS said he could easily find the right hon. Gentleman some more money by taxing manufactured articles.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it must be obvious to the hon. Member that he could not accept such a proposal. No doubt if they went thoroughly into the question a ruthless examination might result in a very considerable sum of money being obtained for public purposes. At the present moment it was obvious that they could not allow a reduction of a penny in the income-tax. The hon. Member had quoted the speech of his predecessor in which he said that the income-tax payer had claims upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer whenever the opportunity came for a reduction. As far as he could see that opportunity had not yet arrived and he did not see any immediate possibility of its arriving. The Prime Minister in the very next Budget gave considerable relief in the most hard cases, and more especially to the professional classes who were perhaps more pressed than any other class by the income-tax, by reducing the income-tax upon earned incomes from 1s. to 9d. The hon. Member had spoken of other countries in which the tax was considerably lighter, but he would remind him that in some cases the taxes on the necessaries of life were very much higher than here. If they had to elect between a tax on the necessaries of life and a tax on income, especially incomes in the region of £1,000, £2,000, £3,000, he thought the people of this country would prefer taxing income which was only essential for superfluities rather than imposing it on the necessaries of life of the poorer classes. The hon. Member had left out one important Empire when he surveyed the income-tax imposed by the various countries of the world. He did not state what Italy charged. There was another very interesting State, namely, Japan, where a graduated income-tax had been imposed. He was told that it ran up to 5s. in the £. That was a very interesting experiment, and he was told that on the whole it had been successful. [An Hon. Member: No.] The highest authority he could quote was the Japanese Chancellor of the Exchequer, who informed him, much to his satisfaction, that there was a graduated income-tax working in Japan, and that it was a successful experiment. It was true that it had only been in operation for a couple of years, but the Japanese finance minister was very satisfied with the results. He thought the graduated income-tax had also been successful in Germany. He could not in the present Budget contemplate the possibility of knocking off another penny.

*Mr. HICKS BEACH said he could understand the Chancellor of the Exchequer saying that he could not in the present Budget contemplate the reduction of the income-tax by 1d. for fear of upsetting his financial arrangements for the year. But when the right hon. Gentleman asked hon. Members on that side of the House what tax they would impose in lieu of the 1d. proposed to be taken off the income-tax he would remind him of the coal tax which brought in a large revenue. In the opinion of many of the right hon. Gentlemen's own colleagues the taking off of that tax was a very great mistake. His hon. friend had put the case clearly for a reduction of the income-tax. The present Prime Minister admitted last year or the year before that a high income-tax was a very great disadvantage, and that in its ultimate issue it was a tax not only upon profits but also upon wages. It was obvious to the Committee that if every individual had to spend a certain portion of his income in payment of taxes, that portion was diverted from more productive expenditure on which it would otherwise be expended, and it thereby tended to diminish the amount of money spent throughout the country on productive wages. What to his mind was the important aspect of this question was that the high income-tax was imposed and kept on for the purpose of paying off our liabilities in connection with the South African War. The tax was raised during the war from 8d. to 1s. 3d., and though it might have been justifiable to keep the tax at a high limit during the time we were actually engaged in that war, and when it was still necessary for the purpose of paying off the liabilities incurred during the war, he felt that it was a very serious thing for any Government to contemplate a high income-tax during a time of peace. They were told no doubt that, with a Liberal Government in power, there was very little prospect of the country being forced into a great war, but nobody could tell what would happen in ten years time. This country might be engaged in a serious war involving considerable expenditure, and, therefore, it was a very serious thing to keep the income-tax at the high level at which it now stood, not for the purpose of paying off liabilities of the late war, but for the purpose of paying the normal expenditure of the country. It meant that the income-tax was now kept at a high level for the purpose of paying for some expensive schemes, such as old-age pensions, which had been introduced by the present

Government. Whatever the right hon. Gentleman might think of the desirableness of the income-tax for the purpose of paying the cost under the old-age pensions scheme, he personally was strongly of opinion that when a scheme was introduced by them based on a non-contributory basis, the least the Government responsible for that scheme could have done would have been to keep on some such tax as the sugar tax, which would have yielded a large revenue, and to which everyone of those interested in the old-age pensions scheme would have contributed. Liberal Chancellors of the Exchequer, including Mr. Gladstone and the present Prime Minister, had declared that it was a very great mistake to keep the income-tax at a high level, because it destroyed the great reserve of this country in time of war. That was the chief argument against maintaining the tax at a high level, and for that reason alone, even if there was no other, he would support the Amendment of his hon. friend. Last year the Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced a scheme of differentiation, under which relief was given to certain income-tax payers, and it had the curious effect that it did not cost the Chancellor of the Exchequer so much as he thought it would, because people became more ready to bring in the full amount of their income to assessment. He thought that was a very good point in favour of the reduction of the present tax from 1s. to 11d. Last year's relief did not touch a large and deserving class of people—namely, those who had an income derived from savings which by the exercise of thrift they had put by during the time they were working. He wished again to enter his strong protest against the line taken last year in granting relief to people whose income took the form of pensions, and not to people whose sole income was derived from savings. He admitted that income derived from pensions was in a different category from income derived from no effort, but surely if it was fair and just to give relief to people whose present income was derived from pensions on the ground that a pension was really deferred income, it was equally fair and just that similar relief should be given to those who had been thrifty and saving at the time when they were working hard and were now living on incomes derived from savings. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider this point in the interval between now and the Report stage of the Bill and see whether he could not grant relief to the most thrifty class of the population.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) said the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken seemed, like many others, to entertain the fallacy which was widespread that a shilling income-tax actually existed. The Prime Minister in his Budget statement this year had pointed out that it was a complete misnomer to call it a shilling income-tax, and that, as a matter of fact, it was much less, amounting on the average to only 9d. or 9½d. in the £. The income of the income-tax paying classes this year could not be less than £1,000,000,000, and that at 1s. in the £ would yield £50,000,000, but as the revenue from income-tax did not yield that amount the tax could not be 1s. As a matter of fact there were about 200,000 people at the outside who paid at the rate of 1s. Who was to blame for this misapprehension? If they passed an Act of Parliament every year which set out that the income-tax was 1s. in the £, they could not wonder if Members of Parliament and others constantly repeated that as a sort of parrot cry. He found in speeches and in electioneering literature that the tax was stated as being 1s. in the £. Why not have the income-tax so graduated as to show on the face of it what the rate really was in respect of different amounts of income, instead of having it graduated in the absurd manner which now obtained? What had happened? As the necessity for more revenue had arisen successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, irrespective of Party, had in making each rise in the income-tax granted concessions to the middle class taxpayer, who was the object of worship on both sides of the House. That system had been carried on until under the late Government they reached the point where the income-tax was graduated up to £700 a year. Last year another step was taken by the Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the

Exchequer, when he made a concession to those persons who were alleged to have earned their income up to £2,000 a year. If those persons showed that their income from all sources did not exceed £2,000 a year they were allowed to claim a 9d. rate; that was to say a nominal 9d. rate. He said nominal, for they were granted all the original abatements, so that the 9d. rate in its turn was graduated. He would be sorry to endeavour to give to the House off-hand an idea of what the graduation amounted to. It was done in the Inland Revenue Report, but he defied any hon. Member to carry the details in his memory; and that was why there was that great misapprehension which led to Amendments like that now under discussion by which the Committee was asked to reduce the 1s. income-tax which did not actually exist. Why could not this clumsy, obscure, and unjust system be discarded in favour of a plain system such as obtained in Prussia? In that country the income-tax was 4 per cent. up to £500 a year, but at the same time the assessment to Imperial taxes was also the assessment for the local income-tax; and it followed that the rich man paid a larger proportion with a *pro tanto* relief to the poorer taxpayer. The hon. Gentleman opposite had drawn a touching picture of the woes of a man who had a little sum in Consols and who had to pay income-tax upon it. The way to give that man relief was to ascertain precisely where the income of the country was, and to obtain a proper contribution from persons who had large incomes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer talked the other night about robbing the hen roost. [IRONICAL cries of "No."] Well, about visiting the hen roost; but it was necessary to ascertain first its address and what was in it. If they only got to know that, information could easily be got as to how the income of the country was distributed, and if the doctrine of taxation according to ability laid down by Adam Smith long ago were applied, and regard were had to the principles which had been subscribed to in theory in this country for generations, the relief of the middle class taxpayer must follow. Of the enormous sum which came under review, as was mentioned by the Prime Minister in his Budget speech—it was a sum approaching £1,000,000,000 sterling—£600,000,000 sterling lay above the £700 a year limit, and if that were taxed at 1s. per £, it would alone yield £30,000,000 a year. In that event the hon. Gentleman opposite would be able to go to his constituents and tell every one of them who had an income under £700 a year that he would be entirely relieved of the payment of income-tax. To speak seriously, he was the last one to say that a middle-class man with £500 or £600 a year ought not to make a proper contribution to the national expenses, for he served his country neither as an officer nor as a private. He only grumbled, and it seemed to be the province of hon. Gentlemen opposite to encourage him to grumble, but it could not be said that the sum which such a man was called upon to pay unjustly pressed him. Once more he appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in view of the financial condition of the country, in view of the fact that we were widening out expenditure in directions believed by both sides of the House to be proper, to set our direct taxation on a proper footing. What was the virtue of direct taxation? It was that they could go to a man directly and inquire what his income was. What was the argument against indirect taxation? It was that it was capricious, and that it hit the wrong man at the wrong time. By a graduated income-tax on a proper scale they could deal with each man according to his deserts, and, making all allowance for his circumstances, call upon him to make a proper contribution for the upkeep of the country.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that the hon. Member had stated that the income of the country was one thousand millions. On what foundation did he make that extraordinary statement? It was merely a guess.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY said that last year the Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Prime Minister, told them that the income of all classes, as returned for income-tax purposes, had leapt up by 35 millions on the gross total of 980 millions the previous year, and everybody knew that a jump of 35 millions in a single year did not show the whole rise.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the explanation of the hon. Member only showed that the Prime Minister had made a guess in the same way as the hon. Member. As a matter of fact, there were no accurate figures in existence which showed the income of the country. It must also be remembered that there were abatements which had to be considered. The real argument which would induce him to vote for the Amendment was this. Since they had had the privilege of being governed by the Radical Party they had had reductions in indirect taxation to the extent of something like six millions or seven millions—two and a half millions of coal duty, three and a half millions of sugar duty, and one million of tea duty. But they had had practically no reduction at all in direct taxation. There had been a nominal reduction of taxation on earned incomes below £2,000 a year; but, as his hon. friend had told the Committee, the extraordinary result had accrued that although there had been a reduction in the tax, there had been practically no reduction in the receipts. He himself last year ventured to say that something of that sort would ensue, because he believed that there were a large number of people—and in that he had been corroborated—who would not submit to the ordeal of publishing what their income really was. While, therefore, there had been practically no reduction in direct taxation apart from the reduction on earned incomes under £2,000 a year, there had been an increase in the death duties, and the right hon. Gentleman must not forget that even supposing the 9d. reduction was an advantage, there was a corresponding disadvantage in the increase of the death duties. Therefore, taking the most favourable estimate, from the point of view of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, they arrived at the conclusion that they had had a reduction of nearly 7 millions in indirect taxation and no reduction in direct taxation. He had been in the House of Commons for sixteen years, and had heard it laid down by Chancellors of the Exchequer on both sides that when there was a reduction in indirect taxation there must be a corresponding reduction in direct taxation. All that had been swept to the winds by hon. Gentlemen opposite, notwithstanding the fact that the direct taxation was imposed for war purposes, and, therefore, when the war was over and the amount of direct taxation was not required, that amount should have been reduced. His hon. friend said that, in his opinion, because they were blessed with a Radical Government, the chances of going to war were not very great. He did not agree with his hon. friend. They were reducing the Army, and apparently were going to reduce the Navy, and if foreign countries saw that we were not in a position to defend ourselves the temptation to come over here and take some of the thousands of millions of which the hon. Member for North Paddington told the Committee we were so full in this country would be very great. The instincts of the robber did not belong entirely to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer; they were shared with him by many countries. He sincerely hoped the hon. Member would go to a division on this question, because there was no doubt that to keep the income-tax at the present high rate pressed extremely hard on all classes of the community. The income-tax was too high, and ought to be reduced. We were not in the position we were in ten years ago. Our securities did not stand so high, and it was very difficult to raise money. The right hon. Gentleman had been trying for two years to raise £5,000,000 for Irish stock. What would be the case if we went to war and had to raise £60,000,000? It would be much more difficult to do now than it was ten years ago. When in 1890 Consols stood at £117, they were told that they were the war chests of the country, and stood against the war chests of France and Germany. He did not want to blame anyone for the condition of things now, but if he were challenged he could show that money was leaving the country fast, because people knew that if they left their money here they would be visited by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his satellite the hon. Member for North Paddington. It was not wise of the right hon. Gentleman to put all his hopes on this particular tax. It was an advantageous tax to look to in an emergency, but it was not a tax to be used for the purposes of the ordinary finance of the country.

*MR. FELL said it had been stated that though the income-tax was described as being 1s. it was in fact much less. But many dividends were paid in this country, and he would like to point out that in every case they paid 1s. income-tax. The hon. Member for Paddington had suggested that every tax should be paid at the source at 1s. and that those who were entitled to pay less should be left to struggle with the authorities to get back that which they should not have paid; but the Committee knew they would never get it back. Though the tax, as the Prime Minister had said, might be 9d., many poor investors paid 1s. because it was deducted from the dividend before they got it. One fact he thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer had possibly ignored. In the Budget which the Prime Minister was supporting the right hon. Gentleman took credit for the fact that he had given an abatement of income-tax of over £1,000,000, but he did not take into account that he had annexed that income which in previous years was allowed to be returned to falling businesses and which last year amounted to some £700,000. With regard to the inquisitorial nature of the tax he very much questioned whether other countries which had an income-tax collected it in the way we did. In the United States and Canada they relied on indirect taxation as a source of revenue, and scouted the idea of an income-tax. We were not the only people blessed with great intelligence, and in giving up indirect taxation and maintaining at an increased rate direct taxation we were going in the directly contrary way to those great Powers the intelligence of whose people was not inferior to our own. The Amendment could not be carried, but the question of whether the tax should be 11d. or 1s. was one that should be discussed. He had an Amendment on the Paper in which he proposed it should be 8d. which was the normal rate of the income-tax before the war. He would not move that Amendment, but as a protest against the retention of the tax at its present high figure he should heartily support his hon. friend.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) pointed out that the hon. Member for Paddington, in reply to the hon. Gentleman who moved this Amendment and who complained that this tax pressed very hardly on the industry of this country, had stated that in fact the income-tax was not 1s., but 9d. in the £. Had the hon. Member considered what the income-tax was likely to be to a good many people this year, and whether they would not have to pay considerably more than 1s. in the £? The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister when introducing the Budget said that he budgeted for an increased revenue from the income-tax. The right hon. Gentleman was informed then that there would be no increase, because trade was falling. The right hon. Gentleman agreed that trade might be falling, but pointed out that inasmuch as the income-tax was paid on the average income of the past three years it would make no difference; that although the incomes might decline the revenue from the income-tax would increase. So that this year as a matter of fact many people were going to pay an income-tax far in excess of income. He would not press that point further, except to say that in the case of a great many people the income-tax would be more like 1s. 4d. in the £ than 9d., and in some cases it would be even higher than 1s. 4d. On these grounds and because he believed that a high income-tax must have a damaging effect upon the prosperity of the country, he supported the hon. Member in his Motion for the reduction.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 242; Noes, 38. (Division List No. 194).

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)

Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Devlin, Joseph
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)

Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Crae, Sir George
M‘Kean, John
M‘Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N)
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montague, Hon. E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncaster
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)

O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Richards, T. F. (Wolv'rh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberston, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchest'r)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowdon, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tillett, Louis John
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.

Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbro)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. McKinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Helmsley, Viscount
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F.E. (Liverpool, Walton
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C.B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Samuel Roberts and Mr. Leverton Harris.

* MR. FELL moved to amend subsection (2), which provided that all enactments relating to income-tax which were in force on April 5th, 1908, should have full force and effect by inserting the proviso "except such as relate to the method of assessment of the profits of companies and corporations." His object, he said, was to call attention to the way in which the profits of some companies were assessed. He believed that he had the sympathy of the Prime Minister last year, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and when he said that there were grave anomalies in the assessment of the profits of companies and corporations, but that he hoped before next year to do something to correct those anomalies, though it was a matter of difficulty and probably he would have to re-draft and consolidate in some way the clauses of the Acts under which those profits were assessed. But, of course, there was always the question in regard to companies why they were not taxed on dividends instead of upon profits. They were assessed under Acts which were sixty years old, and it was impossible on that occasion to go into the case in detail. These Acts with the decisions of the Courts upon them formed a sort of law under which the Commissioners of Taxes at present worked, according to various precedents. Of these Acts the greater number of persons were totally ignorant. He had in mind the case of a company which was one of clear hardship, and which probably would meet with the sympathy of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. It was the case of a company whichshowed a paper profit of £30,000, and it had no cash available at all in this country to pay dividends to the shareholders, yet it had to pay income-tax at the rate of 1s. in the £, on the whole of that £30,000. He objected to the tax of 1s. in the £ being paid, because if those profits had been paid as dividends to the shareholders, the latter could, many of them, as they had heard that night, have obtained an abatement of the tax to 9d. It was a very singular thing that though no dividends were paid to the shareholders, yet the income-tax was deducted from their profits at the rate of 1s. in the £, and they had no chance of getting it back. The company of which he spoke had shown a profit of £15,000 this year, and they had again to pay 1s. in the £ income-tax without having paid any dividend to the shareholders. Their capital had been reduced by that amount, and they would never under any circumstances get any of it back. The Government had got 1s. in the £, though not entitled to more than 9d. He believed that the case which he cited was perfectly unanswerable, and it was to meet such cases that he moved this Amendment. There was another point on which he had the sympathy of the Prime Minister last year, and that was with regard to the deductions allowed

to be made in the balance sheet before the net profit was arrived at. The Commissioners in assessing the profits of a company, did not allow many deductions which the auditors of the company said must come off the profits before the net profits were arrived at. The Commissioners of Inland Revenue did not allow these deductions to be made, and assessed the companies in nearly all cases at a considerably higher amount than their profit and loss accounts showed. It was a dry subject, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer met them in a sympathetic way last year and confessed that there were great anomalies in the way these profits were arrived at, and he understood he was going to look into the way profits were arrived at in the case of companies and corporations. Attention had been called to the case of companies with wasting concerns—mines which only had a few years to last. The best example was that of a big nitrate property in Peru which wou'd be worked out in four or five years. They shipped so much every year and made a very handsome profit on it, but it was capital which they returned on their balance sheet and not profit. The capital would all be used up in a few years, and they should be allowed to deduct this. Another example of these curious anomalies was the sinking of shafts in collieries, for which the income-tax did not allow deductions. On what possible grounds were the income-tax authorities to settle what was the proper way of keeping the accounts of a colliery, and, when the directors and auditors stated their profits after writing off proper amounts for expenditure, to refuse to allow this, that, and the other deduction ? That was a case which frequently arose. The prudent investor put by a portion of his interest to recoup his principal, but the principal, when he got it back, would pay income-tax as well as the income which he received. The law had been made up by all these Acts and various decisions of the Courts on them. The ordinary investor was at an immense disadvantage in discussing these things, because he had very great difficulty in understanding these cases. He was ready to pay what he was legally liable to pay, but he was not ready to pay the sums on which the tax was assessed in many cases. The hon. Member for the Inverness Burghs made a very strong speech last year in favour of the payment of tax only on income, and not on capital in the case of wasting securities. He had every confidence that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he could find time to devote his fair mind and his acute intelligence to this subject, would see that there were grave anomalies existing, one of which was unanswerable—the case of a company which showed a paper profit but distributed no dividends. It paid full income-tax on the profits, while, if they had been distributed, the shareholders would have been able to get an abatement.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 5, line 36, after the word 'tax' to insert the words 'except such as relate to the method of assessment of the profits of companies and corporations.'"—(*Mr. Fell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said he would like to support to some extent the arguments used by his hon. friend opposite. It seemed to him that if a company could show on its total transactions for the year that it had not made a profit, it was hardly fair that it should have to pay, when a considerable amount of its expenditure was nominally capital. Take the case of a company which returned £4,000 or £5,000 profits on its ordinary operations and at the same time had a big contract on which it exhibited a very large loss, or, at any rate, expenditure. The same people were perhaps putting up the capital for the contract on which there was a loss, as held shares in the capital on which the small profit was made. The small profit was completely swallowed up in the large expenditure on which there was no return. In a case like that not only had the company to pay upon its nominal profits, but if it was paying any interest during construction it had to pay on that too, although the interest during construction came out of the pockets of the people who were putting up the capital, and when under no head of the operations of the company was there any profit at all. There ought to be a balance struck of the actual results in each case, and if on the year's operations, for any reason, no profit came home to those who held the capital of the company, these charges ought not to be made. He did not understand that any special rate was proposed under the Amendment, but only that the assessment should be made in a different manner in the case of companies and corporations. He believed there should be some different method of assessment, and that substantial justice was not done when a company, whose total operations might, so far from resulting in a profit, show for some years running a very large loss, should be charged at this unnecessarily high rate on the nominal profits which were swallowed up in the actual expenditure.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said the cases which the hon. Gentleman opposite had put dealt with questions which were rather outside the actual wording of the Amendment. What he understood he wanted was that where a company showed its shareholders a profit upon its transactions, it should be assessed in some method different from that by which the ordinary individual who might be engaged in exactly the same business under exactly the same terms, was assessed. That, of course, would alter the whole practice and policy of the income-tax from the time of its creation. The whole aim and object of the income-tax had been to treat individuals and companies as two identical entities for the purpose of taxation—to lay the same burden of taxation on them—and the Amendment would upset the long-established practice, which had been exceedingly profitable to the State and had not been unduly burdensome, as far as assessment went, on the corporations. The hon. Gentlemen had alluded to the fact that his proposal would affect corporations in several ways. It would affect wasting assessments and expenses incurred in connection with the formation of companies. He had talked about the Court of Chancery. It seemed to him that the Court of Chancery would never permit investments in the kind of companies with which he was dealing.

MR. FELL said they had assets of that nature in their trusts—collieries and things of that sort.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that, quite apart from the loss which would fall upon the Exchequer for the present and succeeding years, he thought it would be quite impracticable and undesirable to distinguish in this invidious manner between individual and corporation.

*MR. WATT (Glasgow, College) said the Amendment would lead to this state of things: that if a company made profits and did not distribute them they would not be called upon to pay income-tax of one shilling in the pound on those profits. He thought that was desirable. The present position was that a company which made profits and did not distribute them was put in a worse position than a company which made profits and distributed them. The average body of shareholders were found to be in such a position financially that a quarter of them got the rebate, and the income-tax charged upon that company amounted to 9d. in the £, whereas the thrifty company, which thought it wise not to part with its profits in the way of dividends, was charged by the Government at the rate of 1s. in the £. He ventured to say that that was inequitable and the Government would be wise in adopting this Amendment, whereby the company which was thrifty and did not part with its profits would be put upon an equality with the company which parted with its profits in dividends.

Amendment put, and negatived.

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8:

MR. FELL, in opposing the clause, said that hitherto the assessors had been paid by results, and judging by the returns they had done extremely well. Under those circumstances he could not see why they should not go on with their remuneration as it was, and there was no necessity to alter this arrangement in the Finance Bill this year.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that although it was true that the assessors were paid by results there were certain principles laid down in regard to the basis of payment which prevented the Government from taking into account the special work. It was in order to enable the Government to deal with these cases on their merits, without being rigidly bound by the rules which were in force at present, that the Government made this proposal which would afford a little more elasticity.

Clauses 9 and 10 agreed to.

MR. FELL, in moving a new clause providing that "No Excise or other duties shall be levied on any sugar manufactured in the United Kingdom from beetroot," said that in the course of the last few years experiments had been conducted in Suffolk and Lincolnshire with regard to the growing of white beetroot and they had been very successful. The percentage of sugar obtained from this beetroot averaged 17 per cent.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he understood the hon. Member was moving that no tax should be put on any sugar manufactured from beetroot in this country. No such tax was imposed at present, and therefore he contended that the Amendment was not in order.

MR. FELL said that what happened last year when this question was raised was that the Prime Minister said there was no Excise duty because there was no sugar grown here, but if sugar was grown in this country an equivalent duty would be put upon it.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: If there is no Excise duty levied at the present time of course the hon. Member cannot move this new clause, and it is out of order.

*MR. WATT, on behalf of the hon. Member for Cambridge University, moved a new clause providing that the income-tax should be charged at one shilling, "provided the incomes of husband and wife be taken to be the income of separate persons." He thought the Amendment had some inherent merit. It seemed to him an injustice that the income of husband and wife should be added together in estimating the income. The tendency of the law during the last thirty years had been to separate the incomes of husband and wife, and the last link that remained with the past was the system of estimating the two incomes as one for the purposes of the income-tax. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to be thoroughly up-to-date in this matter, he would accept the Amendment. There was no reason in the world why for this specific purpose husband and wife should be considered one individual and have their incomes added together. He begged to move.

New clause—

"Provided the incomes of husband and wife be taken to be the income of separate persons."—(*Mr. Watt.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he could not see his way to accept the Amendment. This was a hardy annual which, if accepted, would cost the revenue about £1,500,000, and he must resist attempts to raid the revenue by means of Amendments of this kind. He did not think a hard case was made out. Husband and wife pooled their income in the vast majority of cases. It was the family income, after all, that was being taxed. If he had any revenue to dispose of he would not begin to rectify matters in this direction.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN thought that in some cases there was a measure of hardship; but it was really inseparable from the administration of the tax. By treating the incomes of husband and wife separately they would not get rid of anomalies and hardships; they would only alter their incidence. New hardships would be produced. The hardship had been a little aggravated as the result of the change in regard to earned income. It was in respect of the abatement that the hardship really arose;

and in proportion as the abatement extended the area of this particular hardship would be increased. In the case of small incomes being united, persons who would separately be entitled to abatement might not remain so entitled. The Prime Minister could not see his way to afford relief in those cases last year, and if he were Chancellor of the Exchequer he would not see his way himself. The hardship was one which certain people had to endure in order that the State might wield this great financial weapon—the income-tax.

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 32; Noes, 227. (Division List No. 195.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Clark, George Smith
Crean, Eugene
Fell, Arthur
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Helmsley, Viscount
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Magnus, Sir Philip
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts,S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Stanier, Beville
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson,W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Watt and Mr. Ashley.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett,C.H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Crooks, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch,George Peabody (Bath)
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt,Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth,Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M. (Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Hope,W.Bateman(Somerset,N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
McCallum, John M.
McCrae, Sir George
McKenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
McLaren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Meagher, Michael

Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'd
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Snowdon, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E. (Clackmann'n
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton).
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. McKinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY moved the following new clause—

> "Every person upon whom notice is served in manner prescribed by Section 48 of the Income-Tax Act, 1842 (which section relates to the delivery of notices by assessors) requiring him to make a return of his income chargeable to duty under any and every schedule of the income-tax, shall make a return, in the form required by the notice, which shall show the amount of his aggregate income from all sources, whether he is or is not chargeable with duty, and upon what part or parts of such aggregate income, if any, income-tax has already been paid under the Income-Tax Acts by deduction at the source, and in default shall be liable to a penalty under Section 55 of the Income-Tax Act, 1842. Provided that a penalty inflicted in the case of a person proceeded against for not complying with this provision, who proves that he was not chargeable to income-tax, shall not exceed five pounds for any one offence."

He said that this was the second year that he had moved in this matter. On the last occasion the Prime Minister, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, said he would give it his most careful consideration this year; but he (Mr. Money) was unable to see that any attention had been given to it so far. He submitted that the importance of the subject was great, and that in the interval the case for his Amendment had been considerably strengthened. Last year the inquisition into employees salaries was strengthened, and the method of going behind the backs of small taxpayers to their employers, combined with the abatement system now revealed the incomes of the greater number of the income-tax payers. It had been said that if they endeavoured to secure an abatement or the 9d. differentiation, that constituted the declaration a voluntary one, and that that robbed it of the character of inquisition; but if a man did not, in his declaration, show the amount of his aggregate income from all sources, a penal character attached to the declaration. It was generally conceded that the income-tax needed revision. There was a point in our national development at which public opinion demanded social reforms. But these social reforms cost money; and more money, therefore, had to be raised. It would be seen that if the present fiscal system were to be maintained there was only one legitimate means of paying for social reform, and that was that the income-tax should be thoroughly revised and reformed. He regarded his Amendment as an essential preliminary to the re-adjustment of the income-tax, and a proper reform of our entire taxation. It had been admitted that compulsory declaration by persons with incomes over £700 would bring to light more incomes than had been revealed in the past. Last year, the differentiation brought to light £35,000,000 more income—not new income, but income which obviously had escaped taxation in the years before. If that were so, he asked the Committee to believe that probably a very much larger amount of income would come to light for taxation purposes if the rich man had to make a compulsory declaration of his income from all sources, whether that income was taxed at its source or not, as the poor man now had to do. If the Amendment were carried he would have to make such declaration, under penalty if he made a false return. The Income-tax Committee, in their Report, made a recommendation which was worth attention. They said—

> "Your Committee are of opinion that a personal declaration of total net income in respect of which taxes payable by everyone who may be called upon to make it should be compulsory, and would be of great value in preventing evasion and avoidance of full assessment, and in supplying information on which a system of graduation and differentiation could be based."

Two meanings were attached to that declaration. Some of the Members of the Committee took it to mean what he himself thought it meant, viz.: that the taxpayers should make a list of the whole of the items of his income, whether taxed already or not. Other Members of the Committee took it to mean that if a man had so much of his income taxed at its source, he had not to insert that in his declaration of income. It would be seen that a great difference lay between the two interpretations. In moving his Amendment he asked that the Committee should accept what was indeed the recommendation of some of the Members of the Income-tax Committee, viz.: that a personal declaration should be made by the taxpayer of the whole of his income. It was high time that in dealing with the income-tax they should cease to work in the dark. He contended that as at present levied the income-tax was not a direct, but an indirect tax. If his Amendment were accepted, income at its source could be taxed moderately; and an additional tax could be put on such persons as had not already made a just contribution to the national revenue, under a graduated scale. He thought that any reform of the income-tax ought to be preceded by the institution of some such provision as he suggested. He begged to move.

New clause—

> "Every person upon whom notice is served in manner prescribed by Section 48 of the Income tax Act, 1842 (which section relates to the delivery of notices by assessors), requiring him to make a return of his income chargeable to duty under any and every schedule of the income-tax, shall make a return, in the form required by the notice, which shall show the amount of his aggregate income from all sources, whether he is or is not chargeable with duty, and upon what part or parts of such aggregate income, if any, income-tax has already been paid under the Income-tax Acts by deduction at the source, and in default shall be liable to a penalty under Section 55 of the Income-tax Act, 1842. Provided that a penalty inflicted in the case of a person proceeded against for not complying with this provision, who proves that he was not chargeable to income-tax, shall not exceed five pounds for any one offence."—(*Mr. Chiozza Money.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE admitted that it would be desirable to obtain the information which the hon. Gentleman wished for if a system of graduation were on the point of being established; but he did not think that on the whole it would be justifiable on the part of the Government to impose upon persons the necessity of making returns of that kind in the absence of any provision for taxation to be based upon them in the current year. The demand would, in such circumstances, be purely of an inquisitorial character. The Government could not possibly demand to know what a man's earnings were in order to know what to tax him next year.

***MR. CHIOZZA MONEY:** The Income Commissioners themselves pointed out that it would lead to the declaration of further income.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said there was no advantage in such an inquiry until the time came for the imposition of a tax. He did not want declarations. He wanted revenue. He could not think that this was a practical step, because it would not help at all next year. This year's declarations were already issued and such declarations as would be returned were returned. It was not, therefore, desirable to make men return a second declaration in the course of the same year unless it was for a definite purpose. If it was for a definite purpose—if there was a scheme in the Budget—it might be justifiable, but there was no other cause for inflicting a penalty of this kind on the business men of the country, and therefore he could not accept the Amendment.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that though it might be true of a particular trader that all the profits he made were used by him in his business to assist it, that was a fact known only to himself. The usual return made by individuals might be of the whole of their income or it might not. No one inquired whether it was or not under the present system. The hon. Member for Paddington suggested that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should not be content with such a return, but that the taxpayer should make out a return as to how his income was made and from what source. The demand that a man should make a return showing the particulars suggested was different from any demand made on an income-tax payer at present, except to secure benefits allowed by the State in certain circumstances. It was one thing to ask people to give the information to show that they were entitled to relief; another thing to call for it from all persons in order to pluck them to one's satisfaction. He thought the hon. Gentleman was suffering from a confusion of ideas, and whatever were the merits of his scheme he thought it would not hold water.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) repudiated the idea that the hon. Member for Paddington suffered from confusion of thought. That was the very last accusation that should be levelled at him. Few Members addressed the House with such clarity of thought as his hon. friend. So far as the Chancellor of the Exchequer's contention that this return would cause a great deal of annoyance was concerned, he pointed out that eight out of every ten income-tax payers of the country were already required to make this very declaration. He admitted it caused a certain amount of annoyance, as he knew from personal experience. Why the rich should be exempted from the annoyance he could not see. The right hon. Gentleman said he wanted revenue. So did everybody else. His hon. friend the Member for Paddington wanted revenue, and he wanted this declaration as a necessary channel through which to obtain revenue. So far as its practicability, which was denied by his right hon. friend, was concerned, he could only say that everybody desired to see a graduated income-tax which should reach the highest incomes in the land, and no such method of graduation was possible unless they obtained the declaration proposed by his hon. friend, which was already required from eight income-tax payers out of ten.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) supported the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this matter. He contended that the valuation proposed in this Amendment was not possible in the present circumstances, and thought that the hon. Member who spoke last had rather given away the case for the Amendment.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY said he could not congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the support he had just received. His right hon. friend had quite overlooked the fact that the new clause not merely created declarations but brought to light new income. Even in the past year £35,000,000 more income had come to light, owing to the new regulations, and if another £50,000,000 was brought to light as the result of this Amendment the additional yield would be equal to 1d. on the income-tax all round. As for what the ex-Chancellor had said as to present declarations being voluntary, what we now did in fact was to impose a very heavy fine upon persons who made no personal declaration. A man with an income of £500 a year, if he made no personal declaration, was penalised, and had to pay as much as the rich man.

That amounted to penal legislation and it could not be said that the poor man's declaration was voluntary.

MR. STUART (Sunderland) thought the hon. Gentleman had raised a very important point in this Amendment. Most Members on the Ministerial side of the House looked forward to the time when the man with a large income would pay a higher tax. No doubt the hon. Member thought that something like the Amendment he had moved was necessary and sufficient for the purpose of carrying out that principle. Although it would not be adopted at present it certainly ought to commend itself to the Chancellor of the Exchequer side by side with other schemes which no doubt would be suggested for the graduation of the income-tax. He knew the difficulties, but he also knew that it was a practical question which had to be worked out. The principle had been admitted by the graduation of the death duties, and, the rubicon having been passed, hon. Members were entitled to expect that the graduation of income-tax might be carried out by some such means as the hon. Member for Paddington had suggested, so that an adequate contribution might be obtained from the rich for the benefit of the poor, in order that some amends might be made for the present social condition in which they found themselves.

Proposed clause negatived.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) proposed a new clause, the object of which was to repeal the duty on raw cocoa. He imagined he would have the support of all the teetotallers in the House, because cocoa was about the best temperance drink. It had none of the disadvantages of tea or coffee. He would like to point out how cocoa was recommended in the great organ, the *Alliance News and Temperance Reformer*. It there said—

> "Cadbury's cocoa is a liquid food, a genuine high-class beverage, made under ideal conditions of labour in an English factory, where the health and well-being of the workers receive the constant care of the firm."

Yes, and it was taxed to the extent of 1d. a pound, and that was the reason why they could do so well, and why their employers were able to look after them so well, but he did not know whether that was the reason why the head of that firm just before the last general election gave £20,000 to the free import party. He had never been able to make out quite how that was. That great bulwark of the Liberal Party, Lord Carrington, told them in the House of Lords that he could not put any import duty on hops, because it was the raw material of the poor man's beer, and surely if they could not put a duty on hops they could not put it on raw cocoa, especially as hon. Gentlemen opposite were so very strong on temperance. Were they going to tax the poor man's cocoa and put nothing on hops, thus encouraging him to drink beer and discouraging him from drinking cocoa? It appeared that under what was called free trade, they could tax raw cocoa, which employed no British labour, but on hops, which employed an enormous amount of British labour, they might not put any import tax at all, and the reason, no doubt, was that it might have the effect of employing an enormous amount of British labour and getting for that labour a great amount of wages; they must not do it because it would help the British and would be a bad thing for the foreigner. It struck him that it would also have the effect of keeping many in the country if they grew their own hops instead of buying them from abroad. When hon. Members opposite called themselves free traders and taxed the raw material of the very poorest of the poor, he really thought they had not one single leg to stand on, and the country was rapidly beginning to think the same. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give them some sort of reason why he kept this tax on the raw material of a great industry and also on what was food and drink for the poorest people.

New clause—

> "On and after the thirty-first day of March, nineteen hundred and nine, the duty of Customs of one penny in the pound on raw cocoa shall cease to be payable, and so much of the Customs Tariff Act, 1876, as refers to this duty is hereby repealed."—(*Mr. Hunt.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the hon. Gentleman was capable of waxing eloquent on any topic, and he was glad to see he could get hilarious on cocoa. The very famous firm of cocoa manufacturers which he had named would no doubt be thankful to him for the advertisement. He was not sure what complaint the hon. Member had against the Government. The tax had been on cocoa for some time.

MR. HUNT: You keep it on.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that amongst the duties they had been able to get rid of they had not yet been able to get rid of the tax on cocoa. He did not think they could see their way to do that. It would cost £200,000. They had done something in the way of the reduction of the duty upon another raw material, sugar, and they could not possibly go further and give an abatement of the duty on cocoa. He was not aware that the cocoa manufacturers had any considerable grievance, but with regard to sugar, the Government had been pressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House, and they had responded substantially to the appeal made to them. He was not aware that there had been any great pressure so far as cocoa was concerned. He was afraid, therefore, he could not see his way to accept the proposed new clause.

Proposed clause negatived.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) moved the following new clause:—"It shall be lawful for any person owning and occupying woodlands to elect to be assessed to the duties of income-tax chargeable under Schedule D, and in accordance with the rules of that schedule, in lieu of the assessment to the duties under Schedules A. and B." He said that it raised a very important question to which he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give his careful consideration. He was extremely doubtful whether the acceptance of the clause would have the effect of in any way reducing the revenue. It might indeed have the effect of bringing in a larger revenue than the Chancellor was obtaining at the present time. Anyone who had for a moment considered the question must be well aware that in many cases the taxation raised on woodlands was excessively high, while in other cases it was his belief that people escaped taxation who might well afford to pay. He explained the principle on which income-tax was paid on the greater part of the woodlands in the country. For the purpose of the income tax the assessment of the land for local rates was taken and the income-tax was charged first of all under Schedule A. practically without any deductions whatever. In addition to that a charge for income-tax was made under Schedule B. viz. one-third of the assessment, and consequently all those proprietors of land who attempted to improve their woods and to go in for re-afforesation had to bear considerably increased taxation, whereas those proprietors of woodlands who devastated their property, cut down all the wood, and sold it, escaped taxation to a very large amount. The proposal he made was that any person who owned and occupied woodlands should be, as far as the woodland was concerned, assessed for income-tax in the same way as trades and occupations were assessed on Schedule D, and pay income-tax on the average profits for three years. If this were done, they would remove from this portion of the income-tax one of the faults which Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Mill, and other great economists found in it, viz., that in many cases it was not equitably raised, but frequently paid on incomes which were never received. There were hundreds of thousands of pounds collected in income-tax from the owners of woodlands which had never been earned, and he believed that the present system of collecting income-tax under Schedules A. and B. was very unfair. It was well worth the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to see whether he could not change it and collect the tax in woodlands under Schedule D. These cases were always difficult to explain in actual figures and he thought he would be making it more clear if he took an actual concrete case which had come under his notice, and which showed how badly the present system worked. He was the tenant of certain grass land for which he paid 5s. an acre. His landlord paid income-tax on 5s. an acre, and that was quite right. In the winter there was a great deal of unemployment among the labourers in the surrounding villages, and his landlord came to him and said: "Will you give up these fields for the purpose of afforestation." He replied that he was only too willing to do so, and his landlord during the winter employed a large amount of labour in this way—men who would otherwise have been out of work. That was a very good thing for the country and good for the men. What happened with regard to income-tax? Did the landlord get any advantage whatever from his action? No; he was severely handicapped by the assessment committee. The moment the land was planted the Assessment Committee came down and assessed that land at 10s. an acre, because they said that was the general rule in the country. Therefore, under Schedule A., the landlord was assessed at 10s. an acre, and under Schedule B. at 3s. 4d. an acre when he got nothing for the land in lieu of the 5s. which he was previously getting and putting into his pocket. That was an absolutely wrong principal of taxation. If they adopted the principle he suggested he did not think the Exchequer would be the loser by it. If a man cut down all his timber and sold it and planted nothing, making no provision for the future, he had not to pay income-tax. Any man who looked into the fairness and justice of the matter must see that it was in the interests of the country at large that they should encourage people to try and improve the land rather than encourage the man who devastated what he had. The present system of assessing woods was one of the worst forms of protection he knew of. In the first instance they were taxing raw material, and they were placing taxes on raw material grown in this country. What an outcry there would be if they put, say, 1d. or 2d. a square foot on all imported timber; and yet the moment a man took a bit of waste land and planted it he was charged a heavy income-tax, and when the timber was cut down in 100 or 120 years time every square foot of timber sold would have had to bear a tax of 1d. or 2d. a foot. This fact was well worthy of the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He believed they were handicapping re-afforestation, which many people considered a good thing. They would not encourage any private owner in England to plant. In Scotland they were treated much more fairly. The assessment committees did not place such enormous assessments on the woodlands, and consequently the tax came to a very small amount. In England the Chancellor of the Exchequer might say it was a question for the assessment committees and not for him, but he believed if the right hon. Gentleman took up the question, it would have a big effect on the assessment committees. At present it was absolutely vain to plead before the assessment committees, because they consisted mostly of farmers and landowners whose object was not to allow woodlands to be got down at lower assessments, because he supposed it meant they would have higher rents to pay on their farms. There was nothing which found more work for the unemployed during the winter months, and there were hundreds of labourers who would be at work during the winter if re-afforestation could be carried on. He felt perfectly certain it would be a great boon to the country districts if private owners were encouraged to plant instead of having to pay on incomes which they did not receive. He was not trying to get taxation off anybody, but the principle he liked to see was that a man should not pay on income which he did not receive. There were plenty of people who were paying not 1s., but 1s. 2d. and 1s. 3d., for the simple reason that they were assessed for the purpose of income-tax on a far greater income than they were receiving. There was absolutely no remedy, and it was well worth the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to see whether he could not make some alteration in the law.

New clause—

"It shall be lawful for any person owning and occupying woodlands to elect to be assessed to the duties of income-tax chargeable under Schedule D., and in accordance with the rules of that schedule, in lieu of assessment to the duties under Schedules A. and B."—*Lord Willoughby de Eresby.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the noble Lord had supported the clause which he had moved with very great force and eloquence, and he was very much impressed with the case which he had made. He could not at the present moment accept the clause, because he was not quite sure that that would be the best method of dealing with the matter, but he would promise to give it careful, and he hoped practical, consideration. He was personally very interested in the question of re-afforestation, which he had urged a good many years ago, not on a Unionist but on a Liberal Government. A Commission was appointed which he hoped would report in the course of the next few weeks, and the matter would come in a very practical way before the Government. There had been a Report as far as Scotland was concerned, and there had been a very interesting Report for Ireland, and he hoped there would be one for England, as to the best and most practical method of re-afforesting the country. But it was of very little use coming to the Exchequer for grants for re-afforestation if private owners were to be discouraged If he found the case which the noble Lord had made was borne out by the examination which he would undertake to give to the matter, and if private owners had to pay an unreasonable rate in respect of income which they did not derive, he certainly thought it was a case not merely for consideration but for readjustment. This was certainly not a time when they ought to discourage re-afforestation. He hoped the Government would be able to do something, but they would not be able to deal adequately with the needs of the country in that respect unless their efforts were supplemented by those private owners. If the noble Lord would take that promise that he would look into the matter very closely, he trusted he would withdraw the Amendment.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the Committee would have heard with great satisfaction the assurance which the right hon. Gentleman had given. He did not remember ever to have heard this question raised on the Budget Bill. Like the right hon. Gentleman, he was very much impressed with the case which the noble Lord had made out, but they would all admit that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not deal with it offhand, and the promise he had made to consider it favourably if the case was sustained on examination was all they could expect at the moment. He hoped his noble friend would accept that assurance in the spirit in which it was given and not press his new clause to a division.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) hoped the noble Lord would withdraw the Amendment. At the same time, he knew there was a great deal in what he said. Some hon. Gentleman seemed to think it was rather a landlord's question. It was not that, though it was a question to a certain extent between a good and a bad owner of land. But it was a question of people in the country, because there were many places where afforestation was not a landlord's question at all, but a question for the population. There were rubbish beds and old coal pits which paid practically nothing, but the moment they were planted the owner would have to pay income-tax on them. He agreed with every word the noble Lord had said as to the effect of the income-tax, because he knew it.

Proposed clause, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD R. CECIL moved the addition of a new clause declaring that income arising from dividends on shares in a private company, held on the condition, express or implied, that the holder should give his services in the management or conduct of the business, should be deemed to be earned income within the meaning of Section 19 of the Finance Act, 1907. He said it had become increasingly the practice in this country for traders to turn their businesses into private companies, in which the only shareholders were the partners who formerly carried on the undertaking, and the dividends paid represented the profits earned by them. It was arranged that they should not be paid anything for their services, but should share the dividends, as they formerly shared the profits. A particular case of this nature had been brought to his notice in his own constituency. It was the case of a business carried on by three brothers. They formed a company, took the whole of the shares themselves, received no salary from the company for carrying on the business, but they received the whole of the dividends which were derived from their exertions after paying all the costs of working the business. The question whether such dividends were "earned income" was raised in the course of debate on 3rd July, 1907, and the Prime Minister, speaking then as Chancellor of the Exchequer, said the case ought to come within the definition, and he thought it did; and the right hon. Gentleman added that where a partnership was transferred to a company composed of the same people and carrying on the business in the same way and not offering their shares to public subscription, it was the clear intention of the Government that that should make no difference at all. He did not think anything could be clearer than that, because the Prime Minister expressly rejected that Amendment on the ground that the point was already covered by the words in the Act, the right hon. Gentleman's argument being that the word "remuneration" was sufficiently wide to cover the particular case he had in his mind. In the case he had put before the Committee, the gentleman concerned applied for abatement, and a considerable correspondence took place between them and the Income-Tax Commissioners who decided that the particular case did not come within the words of the Act. The Commissioners did not state their reason for taking this course, but he conceived that they might have acted on the ground that there was nothing in the Articles of Association which expressly made a contract by which those gentleman were to receive dividends in lieu of salary. But surely that made no difference to the principle. He thought his Amendment made clear the intention of the Prime Minister that the mere technical difference between a partnership and a company was not to make any difference in regard to assessments for income-tax—that, if the whole of the dividends were paid away to the former owners, it did not matter that they now called dividends what before the formation of the private company were called profits, the *rationale* of the case was exactly the same. The object of the change was to exempt people who had to work for their bread from paying the same as those who received their income without working. He thought the words he had saggested were adequate, but if the Government thought otherwise he was willing to accept an assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the question would be looked into before the Report stage. He begged to move.

New clause—

"Income arising from dividends on shares in a private company held on the condition, express or implied, that the holder shall give his services in the management and conduct of the business shall be deemed to be earned income within the meaning of Section 19 of the Finance Act of 1907."—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was placed at a great disadvantage in dealing with a very complicated matter of this kind in not having had an opportunity of considering the Amendment.

LORD R. CECIL: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to state that I did send him a copy of it before the sitting of the House to-day.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had only had time to look into what was said in the debates on the Finance Bill of 1907. He understood that if the income was derived from shares which were given to a man as part of his remuneration for the management of a business, it was now treated as earned income, provided the dividends and the possession of the shares ceased the moment he ceased to manage the business, otherwise they could hardly be treated as part of his remuneration.

That was the distinction which had been drawn by the Inland Revenue Take the case of a company formed, say, with a capital of £100,000, the shares of which were not issued to the public. The man who owned the business which was converted into a company became the managing director, and a certain payment was made to him by way of remuneration That clearly was earned income. But suppose instead of retaining all the shares he got £50,000 in cash. Surely the noble Lord would not suggest in that case that the dividends which he got on the reinvestment of that money should be treated as earned income? That would clearly be unearned income, and he did not see that any difference should be made if he retained the £100,000 of shares in his own possession, because, if it were, it would be giving an advantage to a man purely because he did not part with his shares.

LORD R. CECIL said the whole point was whether the income arose from his own exertions. The income in the private company which he had suggested did arise from the exertions of the gentleman who received the dividends, and in the ordinary sense of the word he earned the dividend. It was quite true that, in the other case, it technically belonged to the company, but it was due to the man's exertions that the dividend had been earned. That was earned income in exactly the same way as the private company's income was earned income before it became a limited company.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it was the man who earned the money, even when the concern was carried on with public capital. It was the brain behind the business that counted in the earning of the money, and whether the money was earned for himself or for the public did not matter. Most capital was the accumulation resulting from individual exertions, and the owner of capital received a return for it whether he parted with it, reinvested it, or allowed it to remain in a business. He did not see, therefore, that it should be treated purely as a kind of remuneration for labour.

SIR F. BANBURY said the right hon. Gentleman had not quite grasped the point. He would put it in another way. Two men—say the Chancellor of the Exchequer and himself—became partners in business and agreed to divide the profits. They earned £3,000 and divided it equally. Under the Finance Act of last year they would be able to claim an abatement from 1s. to 9d., because they were each earning £1,500 a year. Then they agreed, for a variety of reasons that they would turn the business into a limited company, that they would retain the ordinary shares, and that they would do the whole work of management of the company. The result was that they were still earning £1,500 a year each but were taxed 1s. instead of 9d. That was the whole point. But supposing they retired from business, they would, of course, have to put someone in their place to do their work, thereby reducing their earnings from £1,500 a year each to, say, £500. Was a man in that case, and this was the real point, to be penalised because he put the word "Limited" after "Lloyd-George, Banbury & Co.," or simply left it "Lloyd-George & Banbury."

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give rather more consideration to this subject. He was, of course, labouring under great difficulty, inasmuch he did not receive the notice of his noble friend; he did not know why.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the notice had only come at question time, and he had been occupied ever since.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that in any case the right hon. Gentleman was labouring under difficulty, and had not been able to read the debate which took place last year. The hon. Gentleman was, of course, then not directly concerned in the Budget, but there was a very interesting discussion on this subject with the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the course of which that right hon. Gentleman gave an assurance to his noble friend and himself, which appeared absolutely to meet the case they had propounded. He expected that his noble friend had, like himself, been the recipient of a considerable number of letters from people who expected abatement on account of the assurance given by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, but who had been denied that abatement. The statement did not appear in *The Times* report of the speech of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it appeared in *Hansard*. It was to the effect that not only must the conditions and circumstances remain unaltered, but that the articles of association of the company must provide that the dividends were paid as remuneration.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Here is the quotation—

> "The remuneration in the case as provided for by the articles of association, would still be treated as income."

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that there were some such passage as that; and when some of them wrote to the Inland Revenue authorities and said: "Here is a case of the exact kind we put in the House of Commons," and asked for relief, the relief was refused, and the passage that was relied on to justify the refusal of the Inland Revenue authorities was that very passage used by the Prime Minister. The line taken now by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was wholly inconsistent with the line taken by the Prime Minister last year. The Prime Minister said that provided the fact was that a private partnership was changed into a limited company for family reasons, that should make no difference to the method in which the partners were assessed for income-tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer now argued that it ought to make a difference. So long as a firm was a private firm he did not have regard to their capital, but treated their profits as earned by their exertions. But directly that firm was turned into a limited company, the Inland Revenue said that part of their earnings was merely interest on their capital, their buildings, good-will, and stock-in-trade. That was true, but the same was true of a private partnership. The buildings were the same, the good-will was the same, and the stock-in-trade was the same. The difference which the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to draw between the two was not only not the distinction made by the Prime Minister last year, but was wholly inconsistent with the line of his argument in defending the Budget at that time. Limited by the conditions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made, the Prime Minister's assurance was almost worthless. He could assure the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the conditions he imposed struck at the basis of the reasons for turning private partnerships into private companies and deprived the latter of all the advantages which they believed they had secured from the Prime Minister's statement. He assured the right hon Gentleman that there was a large number of cases where great disappointment had been felt on account of the line which he had taken. It would prevent many companies being formed, inasmuch as it was inconsistent with the spirit if not actually with the letter of the Prime Minister's assurance; and he hoped that before next year the right hon. Gentleman would look into the matter and see whether those people could not get the full benefit which the Prime Minister intended.

MR. J. M. HENDERSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said that the point which the hon. Baronet opposite had missed was this: If this firm of Lloyd-George, Banbury & Co, earned £3,000 a year profit, and divided £1,500 between them, and they turned the firm into a company they capitalised their earnings, which at 5 per cent. would amount to £30,000. They had got, therefore, on paper, something representing the full value of twenty years earnings, and were not entitled to take off their income-tax.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said they might no doubt reduce their capital, but the capital in the new company might be and in many cases was the same as the capital of the partners in the private firm.

MR. J. M. HENDERSON said that assuming that was so, the remedy lay absolutely in their own hands, because they could not pass a resolution that each of the directors should receive the same remuneration as he got before.

*MR. DUNN (Cornwall, Camborne) said their sympathies need not always go out to the trader who for various reasons had turned his business into a limited liability company. There were many advantages and probably some disadvantages in his so doing. The payment of 1s. instead of 9d. might be one of the disadvantages. There were, however, many compensating advantages. The difference of the word limited in the name of the firm might make all the difference to the hon. Gentleman the Member for London if the business in which he supposed himself to be in partnership with the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not successful. If it was a private firm and was not successful a terrible calamity might happen. That House might even lose the presence of the hon. Member. But if it was turned into a limited liability company it mattered not whether the business was successful or not. The position of the hon. Member was assured. They could still retain his presence and listen to his speeches. Having regard to the fact that directly a business was turned into a limited company the whole of the private estate of the members of the company was protected, he did not think it was too much to ask them to pay a little increased income-tax as the price of the indemnity both to person and estate, that the company status conferred. In addition to that, as had already been said, it was an easy thing for the directors by means of a resolution to agree to pay a reasonable sum for the services they rendered. He hoped the Amendment would not be accepted.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) supported the new clause. He said the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had made a flippant and roystering speech, but had not, if he might say so, met the point of his noble friend's new clause. The point was whether or not a particular kind of income was earned or unearned. There were many cases where a man in a company's service had to take shares on the understanding that when he left their service the shares would revert to the company. The dividend on the shares was the reward of his personal exertion, and ought to be regarded as income. If this were not recognised, the whole system of giving employees an interest in a business would be imperilled; profit-sharing of employees would be penalised. The refusal to recognise this was another instance of straining the letter and breaking the spirit of the Act of last year.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 57; Noes, 266 (Division List, No. 196).

AYES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Clark, George Smith
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Keswick, William
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlingt'n
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Bowles.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, Geogre William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir

Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch,George Peabody(Bath)

Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt.Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J. M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col.Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope,John Deans (Fife,West)
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil(St. Pancras,E
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh,Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G. Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter

Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk, E.
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert J.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln
Roberts, G H. (Norwich)
Robertson,SirG.Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw.(Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hn. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh.

Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax
Whittaker, Rt. Hn. Sir Thomas P
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton
Wood, T. McKinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

MR. HICKS BEACH, in moving the following clause:—"In addition to the deductions of one-eighth and one-sixth allowed under Section 35 of the Finance Act of 1894, there shall also, for the purposes of collection, be allowed the cost of insurance and a deduction for expenses of management not exceeding 5 per cent. of the gross annual value," said he wished to draw the attention of the Committee to assessments for income tax under Schedule A. Under Schedule A the owner was supposed to pay income-tax on the net income of his property. But in many cases he paid on a sum which was much more than the net income. Under the schedule he was allowed to deduct from the gross rental one-sixth in houses and one-eighth in land. That deduction was supposed to represent the actual cost of repairs to such property, but as a matter of fact, the allowances made did not by any means cover the actual cost of upkeep, and the owner of an estate paid income-tax at the rate of about 2d. in the £ more than he ought to do. When this clause was moved last year, the Prime Minister said he saw no reason to interfere in a matter in which a Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer had not seen fit to take any steps. But his point was that while there was graduation of income-tax nothing had been done to remedy this grievance. Suppose there was a small landowner who derived an income of £1,200 a year from his property and £1,000 a year from his profession, his total income brought him beyond the limit of £2,000, and he was not allowed to claim a deduction in respect to his earned income. But that income received from his property, which was assessed at £1,200, was not £1,200 but very often only £800, and in that case he certainly ought to be allowed to claim the deduction. The differentiation in the income-tax introduced last year threw additional hardship on the small property owner and the small landowner. The clause he had put on the Paper was framed very moderately. It only asked that an allowance should be made for insurance similar to that made to shareholders of industrial companies before their gross profits were assessed for income-tax, and that a small sum should be deducted for cost of management. In the case of an industrial company every allowance was made for cost of management, and, in asking for an allowance of 5 per cent. on the gross income, he was not putting forward any excessive claim. It was based on a good precedent. Clause 7, subsection 5, of the Finance Act of 1894, in dealing with the principal value of an estate for income, provided that there should be allowed the cost of management out of the gross value of the estate. He did not plead for the big but for the small landowners of the country, and he did so because he thought the assessment under Schedule A did a great injustice to them. He begged to move.

New clause—

"In addition to the deductions of one-eighth and one-sixth allowed under Section 5 of the Finance Act of 1894 there shall also, for the purposes of collection, be allowed the cost of insurance and a deduction for expenses of management not exceeding 5 per cent. of the gross annual value."—(*Mr. Hicks Beach.*)

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. HOBHOUSE reminded the Committee that the principle now raised had been discussed before. In the discussion in connection with the Act of 1894 the allowance made by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer was raised from one-tenth to one-eighth in response to representations from both sides of the House, and, if not absolutely satisfactory to everybody, it, nevertheless, met with general assent as a reasonable figure. He recognised that there was some hardship with regard to the question of insurance, and, while he could make no definite promise, he would consider it as fully as he could between now and next year.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY said that when they brought this question forward last session, they received a bigger promise than careful consideration, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a most emphatic answer. The right hon. Gentleman then stated that he would consider the matter, and if he found that income-tax was being paid on incomes which were not received he would not be slow to remove any such grievance. He took the trouble to send the right hon. Gentleman a case pointing out what they had always argued, that one-eighth on land and one-sixth on buildings was not sufficient, and that in every case more income tax was secured from land than was warranted by the income received from it. In addition to that, the legislation proposed this session practically meant paying a premium to the landowner to do nothing for the housing of labourers on the land. It was upon the building of cottages that the largest expenditure took place on the land, and therefore a larger percentage ought to be allowed off the gross rental. So long as they did not allow a proper percentage for the upkeep of those cottages on an estate and passed legislation to build cottages out of the rates it would be most disastrous to the ratepayers, and there would be a feeling of injustice.

MR. HICKS BEACH asked if it would meet the views of the Treasury if next year he put down a clause providing that a man might make a declaration of his income under Schedule D, setting forth the receipts from his farms on the one hand, and the cost of upkeep on the other. He ventured to assert that a good case had been made out for this Amendment.

Proposed clause negatived.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) moved a new clause to repeal the excess duty on hackney carriages. His proposal was to relieve the cab-driver of 15s. out of the £3 he paid for his licence. He moved this new clause some two years ago, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer then stated that the carriages to which he referred were instruments by which the business was carried on, and being a tax on locomotion erred against sound principle. On that occasion he was asked to be content with that expression of sympathy, and he had consequently possessed himself in patience for two years. He could not, however, remain content any longer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the occasion he referred to suggested at the end of his speech that the matter should be deferred, and he would give it his careful consideration when the Government took up the question of the relation between local and Imperial taxation. He moved his Amendment now in order to see what position this very reasonable demand now occupied.

New clause—

"The excess duty of fifteen shillings for every hackney carriage as defined in Section 4 of the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888, shall be and is hereby repealed."—(*Mr. Bridgeman.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that this was really a matter for the local auhorities rather than for the Exchequer, as the whole sum went towards local taxation. The question was whether the Committee desired to take away £140,000 from the relief of rates. He was not prepared to recommend that course, and did not think that the hon. Member would find much support.

MR. BRIDGEMAN said he wished to know when the Government were going to carry out the promise made by the Prime Minister two years ago and take into consideration the relations between local and Imperial taxation. He did not wish this sum to be taken away from the local authorities. He wished to give them more, but he wished the tax to be taken off cab-drivers.

Proposed clause negatived.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY moved a new clause providing that Section 12 of the Finance Act, 1898, shall apply in cases where the owner is a body of persons, corporate or incorporate, who is exempt from income-tax under the Acts dealing with exemptions for charitable purposes. He explained that it was devised in the interest of certain small charities, which, under a legal decision in the House of Lords, had been required to pay the land tax in full. He took a somewhat paternal interest in this matter, because it was on an Amendment of his own which the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1898 accepted that this question had arisen. That Amendment gave considerable relief to small payers of land tax. It also gave the same exemption with respect to income-tax. There were a good many small charities throughout the country—several of which were in his immediate neighbourhood—which had for a number of years received the relief given under the clause, but unfortunately in a case brought by the Excise, and decided by the House of Lords, it was held that the word "owner" did not apply to trustees. That case was taken in regard to the income-tax and had no reference to the land tax, but apparently the Inland Revenue had applied the decision of the Court to the land tax as well as to the income-tax. The result was that these small charities had had to pay the land tax in full. The matter concerned poor people whom the House was desirous of helping, as had been shown in the discussion on the Old-Age Pensions Bill. The effect of the legal decision given by the House of Lords had been to fine these poor people for no fault of their own. He could state on the authority of Lord St. Aldwyn, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1898, that it was intended to exclude charities of the character referred to from the land tax. He asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could see his way to restore the exemption. It could not be a serious matter to the Exchequer, but it would be a great benefit to the pensioners who were receiving help from the charities. He begged to move.

New clause—

"Section 12 of the Finance Act, 1898, shall apply in cases where the owner is a body of persons, corporate or incorporate, who is exempt from income-tax under the Acts dealing with exemptions for charitable purposes."—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the effect of the proposed new clause would be, not to restore an exemption, but to override a decision of the Courts interpreting an Act passed by a Government of which the hon. Member was a supporter. The hon. Member had minimised the financial result of his proposal.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY said the Revenue authorities were in possession of all the facts already. They gave the exemption in earlier years, and they knew exactly what the weight of it was.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said they could tell exactly what it was in those particular cases, but once the principle of the Amendment was accepted, they would have to extend its application very considerably. Under those circumstances he could not see his way to accept the Amendment, because it might mean considerable loss to the revenue.

*Mr. EVERETT said he supported the new clause. He had had a good many communications from persons in his constituency pointing out that without restoration of the exemption great hardship would be caused to numbers of very poor people.

Proposed clause negatived.

Mr. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) moved a new clause, the object of which was to provide that in future railway companies should be allowed to deduct from their income-tax the sums they had paid for railway passenger duty. This railway passenger duty was, he said, put on a long time ago, in 1831, and was a tax on locomotion. Its object was to prevent undue competition with post-gigs and tramways—which latter had long since been practically relieved of the duty of 5 per cent. The matter came before a Select Committee in 1876 which reported that in their opinion a strong case had been made out, when the state of the revenue permitted, for a repeal of the tax, on the ground that the reasons for it had ceased to exist, and that it was unfair to continue a tax on one kind of locomotion when all taxes on other kinds of locomotion had been repealed. That argument was equally good to-day as it was in 1876. Indeed, the tax was far more unjust to-day than when the Committtee reported, and he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would, if not this year, in some subsequent year repeal it. He begged to move.

New Clause—

"Any railway company shall be entitled to deduct from the total amount payable by such company under this section the aggregate sum paid by the same company during the above-mentioned year for duty at the rate of five pounds per one hundred pounds under Section two of 5 and 6 Vict., c. 79, and to the schedule thereto, and for duty at the rate of two pounds per one hundred pounds under Section 2, subsection 2 of 46 and 47 Vict., c. 34, upon moneys received or charged for the hire, fare, or conveyance of passengers upon or along any such railway."—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)—

Brought up, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was not going to defend the railway passenger duty or enter upon its merits. He had to point out that this involved a sum of £350,000 which he would have to make up by imposing taxes in other directions, and he did not think that anything could be gained by that. He did not think that the imposition of the railway passenger duty had ever really interfered with railway development or the prosperity of railway companies. Under these circumstances no case had been made out for its abolition such as would justify him in accepting the Amendment.

Proposed clause negatived.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; to be read the third time To-morrow.

BEE PEST (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

SIR F. BANBURY said that his hon. friend the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture for Ireland had kindly consented to the re-committal of this Bill to consider some Amendments be proposed to move on Clause 5. He would deal with the first of his Amendments, and if he was beaten on that he would not proceed with the others.

Bill re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House in respect of Clause 5.—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 5:

SIR F. BANBURY moved to leave out "may" and insert "shall." The object of his Amendment was to provide that the local authority should see that compensation was paid, not exceeding one-half of the value of the bees or articles or appliances which were destroyed. All previous Acts of Parliament which dealt with the destruction of diseased animals enacted that the compensation should be obligatory. There was a clause to that effect in the Diseases of Animals Act of 1894. In this case compensation would not be more than half. Sections 14, 15, and 16 all contained the same provision, that the compensation should be obligatory. They had been told that the reason it was not made obligatory in this case was that in the Insect Act of last session compensation was permissive. He found the Insect Act referred to the Act of 1877, cap. 268, which dealt with the Colorado beetle. It was true that under that Act compensation was not compulsory on the local authority, except that it was not left in their hands whether or not they should pay, but in those of the Privy Council. The Acts he had cited practically compelled the local authority to pay compensation. The only Act which did not do so was the Act of last session, and that only dealt with insects which came over and destroyed crops. Insects were not kept as an industry as bees were. He was sure the House did not wish that the local authority should have any temptation to be unfair. They should not have the option of saying that one man was deserving and they would give him compensation and refuse it to another because he was not deserving. Having taken a man's hive and all the paraphernalia of his industry they ought to pay in every case where in the interests of the community they destroyed bees.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 26, to leave out the word 'may,' and to insert the word 'shall.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'may' stand part of the clause."

*The VICE-PRESIDENT of the DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE for IRELAND (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.) said he wished to point out the radical difference between the Diseases of Animals Act and this small measure. In the first case the compensation came out of the rates or out of public money provided by Parliament. In this case it came from a joint fund, part of which was paid by the Department of Agriculture, and part out of a penny rate struck for the purpose of agricultural education. The committee of agriculture in each county was to administer the Act, and as they were engaged in the work of promoting these small industries they naturally took a great interest in these questions, and it would be possible to provide compensation up to a half in at least the great majority of cases, but if they made it compulsory the result would be that the Act would be blocked, and would not be enforced at all. The Bill was founded on a clause of the Act of last session, and there was more analogy between bees and the insects that Act dealt with than between bees and bullocks.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.) hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not really oppose the Amendment. If he did he would be causing a great deal of injury possibly to a great number of innocent persons. The section would permit not only infected bees, but perfectly healthy full-blooded bees, in an area arbitrarily declared to be infected, to be destroyed. The fixing of that area was only a precautionary measure, and it was very probable that a large number of bees in the area would not be infected at all. The fixing of the area was only a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of disease, and if bees were arbitrarily seized upon and destroyed, the owners should be assured that they would get compensation, without having to go through the laborious process set out in the Bill. It provided that in the first instance the Department of Agriculture must find that it was just and proper that compensation should be given. But that was not enough. After they had issued their edict that the unfortunate beekeeper was to get possibly one-third of the value of his bees, that had to be corroborated by the local authority, and if they withheld their consent the unfortunate owner, through no fault of his own, got no compensation. Except that it was true that it was rather hard to compare a bee with a bullock, the principle underlying this and the Diseases of Animals Act was precisely the same. In the latter case the compensation was two-thirds of the value, and where an animal was not diseased, but was killed as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of disease, the full value was paid. If the right hon. Gentleman could not do that the least he could do was to allow compensation to the extent of half the value to be compulsory. To restrict the compensation to a half was in itself a great injustice, but they were willing to waive that point in the hope that at least the compensation should be made compulsory in all cases.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) did not think the Committee realised that this was an important industry in certain parts of Ireland. There were in certain counties as many as 1,200 beekeepers who had appliances of more or less value and novel construction. It was proposed under the clause arbitrarily to take away their property. It was not shown by any means that it would be done when there was a foul brood; it would be done when any sets of hives were alleged to be contaminated, and it was to be done in an arbitrary fashion. The least the right hon. Gentleman could do under the circumstances was to adopt the Amendment and make the payment of compensation compulsory. No doubt it was true that in many cases the bees would die in any event, but on the other hand there was a large number of cases in which they were probably perfectly sound. He therefore had much pleasure in supporting the Amendment.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 169; Noes, 34. (Division List No. 197.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T.C.R.
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Benn, Sir J. Williams(Devonp'rt
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J(S. Pancras, W.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H(Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J.(Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody(Bath)
Gulland, John W.
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope, W. Bateman(Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A.(Donegal, W.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy(Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R.(Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, Sir George
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J.(Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)

Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Walsh, Stephen
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt. Hn Sir Thomas P
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clark, George Smith
Coates, Maj. E. F. (Lewisham
Dalrymple, Viscount
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Hunt, Rowland
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Valentia, Viscount
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Charles Craig.

Clause agreed to, and Bill reported without Amendment; As amended, in Committee, considered; read the third time, and passed.

COSTS IN CRIMINAL CASES BILL.

As amended (by the Standing Committee), considered.

Amendments agreed to—

"In page 2, line 12, at end, to add the words '(4) No expenses to witnesses, whether for the prosecution or defence, shall be allowed at a Court of Assize or Quarter Sessions before which any indictable offence is prosecuted or tried, if such witnesses are witnesses to character only, unless the Court shall otherwise order.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

"In page 2, line 26, after the word 'due,' to insert the words 'for travelling or personal expenses.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

"In page 3, line 42, at end, to add the words 'For the purpose of meeting any change in the financial relations between any counties and boroughs which may arise by virtue of the provisions of this Act as to the payment of any costs allowed under this Act, any necessary equitable adjustment may be made by agreement between the councils of the counties or boroughs concerned, or, in default of agreement, by the Local Government Board. The Board may at their option determine the matter as arbitrators, or otherwise, and, if they elect to determine the matter as arbitrators, the provisions of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1868, respecting arbitrations by the Board of Trade, and the enactments amending those provisions, shall apply as if they were herein re-enacted and in terms made applicable to the Local Government Board and the determination of matters under this subsection. For the purpose of this subsection the Local Government Board may hold any local inquiry, and subsections one and five of Section eighty-seven of the Local Government Act, 1888, shall apply accordingly.' "—(*The Attorney-General.*)

Amendment proposed—

"In page 3, line 42, at end, to add the words 'and to remain in attendance for that purpose during the sitting of the Court, or until such hour as the Court shall direct.' "—(*Mr. Rawlinson.*)

Mr. CARLILE asked whether the clause with the Amendment of his hon. friend did not suggest a great waste of time on the part of this individual who was to attend the Court. Had he to be present under the Amendment the whole time that the Court was sitting, merely on the off-chance of having to provide certain payments which might not arise?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) said the hon. Member had, he thought, omitted to observe the last part of the Amendment, "or until such hour as the Court may direct." They proposed to leave it in the hands of the Court.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

Mr. CARLILE asked who was the proper officer and how his decisions as to costs were to be controlled or checked. It seemed to him that the proper officer had too much of a free hand in fixing what the expenses should be. Then he wanted to ask whether the payment of a poor defendant for his defence out of the funds which would be ultimately provided from the borough or county council funds, would carry with it any disqualification for the franchise, as poor relief did.

Sir W. ROBSON said the Answer to the last question was in the negative. The proper officer was the treasurer of the borough, but he had not unqualified discretion.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

TUBERCULOSIS PREVENTION (IRELAND) BILL.

Order for the Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) said he did not intend to offer any opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill, though he felt bound to tell the House that there was a good deal of opposition to its provisions in Ireland. His object in rising was simply to ask the Chief Secretary if the Bill could be sent to a Grand Committee upstairs, so that proper time might be allowed for the purpose of considering Amendments which some of his friends desired to introduce. In respect of one or two points connected with the Bill there had been a good deal of comment. Its provisions applied to every person who was troubled with tuberculosis, and when the medical officer of a district found that a person was suffering from the disease he had to report that person immediately, which meant an expenditure of 2s. 6d. per patient for the local authority. The question of providing sanatoria for these unfortunate people also came in, and there was no contradicting the fact that these establishments must cost a great deal of money. He imagined that if the Bill passed, every working man who might be afflicted with this disease would, as it were, be singled out, and would be marked as an affected person. In many ways that might injure him, and more especially it might be the cause of his being unable to find employment. Other men, naturally, would not like to work in a place with a man who would be liable to spread infection, and under the circumstances he thought they should give the measure fair consideration in Committee in order to ensure that the least possible amount of harm should be done. Personally, he was in favour of doing everything that was possible to remove the danger of the spread of infection, but so many difficulties might be created and hardships caused that he thought they should be very careful how they went to work. He knew that the right hon. Gentleman was animated by the best intentions, but it was necessary that certain precautions should be taken and that those interested in Ireland should have an opportunity of considering the Bill in Committee with a view to inserting Amendments that would have the effect of minimising the worst results anticipated from the measure. He believed that the discussion of the Bill in Grand Committee would not take more than one day, and he appealed to the Chief Secretary to allow it to go upstairs.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG agreed to a large extent with what had been said by the hon. Member for Dublin. One difficulty he had found in connection with the Bill was that whereas, as the hon. Member had pointed out, it was rendered compulsory on the medical officer to report all cases of tuberculosis that he might meet with in the performance of his duties, so far as he could see the Bill did not state what the authorities were to do with the cases so notified beyond the very modest requirements of Section 2 of the Bill. As the hon. Member had said, the difficulty of the Bill was that it would to a very large extent mark these people down as comparatively dangerous members of the community, without at the same time insuring that any very serious steps would be taken towards curing them of tuberculosis, if they were curable, or sufficiently segregating them if they were in a state that was past curing. That seemed to him the fundamental objection to the Bill. Another object he had in rising to speak on the subject was that he understood that any hon. Member who took part in a debate of that kind was nearly always chosen as a member of the Grand Committee before whom the Bill would come upstairs. He was sure the Chief Secretary, who was in charge of the Bill, would acknowledge that he had given valuable assistance in connection with another Irish Bill which had just left a Grand Committee, and he hoped the authorities who selected persons to serve on Grand Committees would note that he was a fit and proper person to serve in connection with the Bill now before the House.

MR. SUMMERBELL wished to appeal to the Government to be as fair as possible in dealing with a matter of this kind. In this Bill machinery was going to be set up with the object of preventing the spread of tuberculosis in Ireland, and no one would say that the object was not a good one. It was from Ireland we obtained a large number of our soldiers, and he hoped the House would take note of the fact that the Government were discharging from the Army every year about 400 men who were suffering from consumption. They were sent away to their homes as unfitted to continue in the Army, and according to the evidence on the subject they carried with them the liability to spread this dread disease among other people in various parts of the country. He contended, in view of that fact, that before they asked municipalities to be at the cost of setting up machinery in order to grapple with the disease, the Government ought to do their duty by guarding against the spread of disease by soldiers who were discharged from the Army. The War Office authorities had been appealed to on the subject, but they had declined to spend the few thousand pounds that would be required in order to effect that object. He took advantage of the present opportunity to appeal to them again to do their duty and see to it that they were not the principal people to spread the disease in various parts of the country. At a cost of a few thousand pounds the War Office authorities might establish an institution for the treatment of these soldiers, and so prevent their going away, with the result perhaps of communicating the disease to other persons. He had served on a Select Committee in regard to this matter, and he was strongly of opinion that before the Government brought forward a Bill of this kind they should agree to the small expenditure that would be needed to put an end to the risk now caused by the annual discharges from the Army of consumptive soldiers.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) was sure that every Member of the House must sympathise with the desire of the Chief Secretary as embodied in the Bill, but he confessed that he had read the proposals of the Bill with a certain amount of doubt. He thought Members of the House ought to realise that tuberculosis was not a defined disease like scarlet fever or small-pox, but that two or three medical men often made different diagnosis in the same case. He himself—and probably every other Member of the House was in the same position—knew of individual patients who were stated by one doctor to be suffering from tubercular disease, while another doctor, equally well qualified, denied it. Tuberculosis was not a defined disease, and the Government admitted as much in the first three lines of the Bill, because it was provided that the Local Government Board should make an order prescribing the circumstances in which a person suffering from tuberculosis " of any form, or at any stage " should be notifiable. They did not think it necessary to state that forms of small-pox had to be defined by the local authority. It was a matter that could be determined, and it caused no criticism among medical men. That was not the case with tuberculosis, and the clause was drawn so widely that any person suffering from any form of consumption, or at any stage of the disease, had to be notified. The far-reaching character of the proposal might be gathered when he informed the House that he was told that three out of ten normally healthy persons were suffering from one form or another of tuberculous weakness. He did not know whether the Government seriously intended that regulations of so severe a character should be issued. The matter was one of great importance, and such a Bill as this ought not to be rushed through after midnight, but should go to a Grand Committee for full consideration. The Bill said that the Board might from time to time prescribe forms and stages of the disease, but the House did not know in whom the right was to be vested. The position was rendered very difficult by the fact that there existed the great and substantial disagreement among doctors on the subject to which he had alluded. The hon. Member for Dublin had said that they were running a great risk of causing hardships. His own view was that they were running the risk of, so to speak, scheduling these people as suffering from a really serious disease and doing them more harm than they could possibly hope to do them good. They incorporated five or six different sections of other Acts in the Bill, and altogether it was about as complicated a case of legislation by reference as they could have. These six sections gave the local authorities the rights they now possessed in cases of small-pox. The Bill also authorised the local authorities to establish hospitals, and there was a point in regard to which he felt himself at issue with the Bill. The county councils in Ireland were authorised to spend a penny in the £, and in certain cases twopence, in establishing hospitals and dispensaries. They were entitled to borrow money for that purpose and in suitable cases two or three had the right to combine for the purpose of establishing a joint hospital. Did the hon. Members who were acquainted with existing hospitals for tubercular disease seriously think that the average county council in Ireland was going to raise money to create an adequately equipped hospital to deal with that particular disease? They would not do it, and he did not think they could afford to do it on a rate of 2d. in the £. The provisions for recouping them were illusory, because in nine cases out of ten it would be impossible for the persons who were treated to repay the local authority the cost of their treatment, which he reminded the House was extremely expensive. He thought that the Bill was based rather upon a misapprehension that tubercular illness was of purely a local character, and he could not bring himself to believe that a county council with an area of low rateable value was the proper authority to deal with illness which was certainly national in its character. They could not trace the source of the illness to any particular locality and he thought the matter ought to be dealt with in a far more comprehensive way than was proposed. It was almost ridiculous to suggest that a county council should appoint a bacteriologist to look into tubercular cases. It was a class of bacteriology which required a longer and more expensive bacteriological training than any other. The whole idea was impossible when associated with county councils. If on such exiguous funds skilled bacteriologists were to be appointed very little money would be left for other work, and the county councils could not keep men sufficiently trained to deal with the very difficult and intricate problems which would have to be encountered. The Bill ought to receive more complete consideration than it could receive in the House, and should, if possible, be sent to a Grand Committee.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I quite admit this is a Bill which deserves full consideration. It has already received great consideration in Ireland. The Bill has been printed in all the Irish newspapers. Its principles have been affirmed by all the medical societies in Ireland. The Royal College of Surgeons, the Royal College of Physicians, the British Medical Association, the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, and the Irish National Association have all gone most carefully into it and considered its provisions, so that although undoubtedly there are points and matters to be considered in Committee, the subject, so far as Ireland is concerned, has already received very careful attention. It is not surprising that Ireland should feel a deep interest in the subject, for the ravages of this disease there have reached a positively appalling figure. The death rate from tuberculosis in England is 1·6 per 1,000; in Ireland it is 2·7 per

1,000. In fact one-sixth of the entire death rate in Ireland is due to tuberculosis. Twelve thousand people die annually from it. Now it is certainly known on the highest scientific authority that this disease, if treated properly, in its early stages is a preventible disease. It has also been clearly established that it is spread by very simple and now ascertained methods. Having regard to the fact that this terrible disease is steadily increasing in Ireland, it is not to be wondered at that the Irish people should be alive, and peculiarly alive, to its horrors. Owing to the untiring labours of Lady Aberdeen the subject has attracted an amount of attention in Ireland which would surprise people here. The Tuberculosis Exhibition, a somewhat gruesome thing, has visited nearly seventy places in different parts of Ireland, and has attracted and profoundly interested thousands of people. Lectures have been delivered, over three hundred, by scientific men from all parts, and these have been closely attended and eagerly followed. There have been also, what perhaps is even more interesting, some 900 demonstrations and popular talks with the people upon the subject of how this disease is spread by contagion, what particular acts should be avoided, and what care and what precautions should be taken. The medical men and the local authorities have participated in these efforts in a most remarkable manner. The clergy of all denominations have joined in; and really the matter has assumed something like a national campaign against the disease which, as I have said, is preventible, and the ravages of which can be, if not wholly removed, at all events largely destroyed. That is the state of the case. The noble Lord a little misapprehends the object of the first clause. I quite agree that it is one of the horrors of this disease that it is a domesticated one, and that poor consumptives have long been regarded by affectionate families as doomed but harmless people, who might be allowed to remain in their houses, and were to be treated as if they were on the same footing as cripples or persons of inferior understanding, until they met their inevitable death—usually between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. Now we are all agreed, I am sure, that you have to deal with the utmost tenderness with cases of that kind, and that it is impossible, however terrible the disease may be, to let doctors loose upon these homes and remove these people forcibly as it were, and stamp them as infected. That is the reason why, I believe, the first clause is worded in such a manner as to leave it to the Local Government Board, who have skilled doctors as part of their establishment, to determine the circumstances in which notification is to take place, to secure privacy, and generally to deal with this difficult matter in a spirit of the utmost care and in a tentative and most judicious way. The clause is so put down, rather with reference to public opinion than to health considerations. We cannot go ahead of public opinion, and the clause is framed and appears in its present shape so as to prevent our travelling too fast. With regard to hospitals, there are counties in Ireland, certainly, which are not in a position to establish, and which would never dream of establishing, hospitals on a scale large enough, but they could act in association with others, and even if it is only a small hospital that is established it is of great value, from the educational point of view, among the teachable population as showing how the thing can be dealt with in the cases of persons in an advanced stage. Then there are the sanatoria, which should be inexpensive indeed, the more inexpensive the better, because after a time they become so infected that they are better destroyed. The ravages of this disease affect us all, and most of us, I dare say, have friends who have derived enormous benefit from the treatment they have received in sanatoria in healthy spots in the country.

I should agree that if you had to deal in this aspect with the whole population it would be beyond the means of certain counties, but that is not what is intended. The idea is to set the thing going in such a way as to show by hospitals for extreme cases, and by sanatoria in the best parts of Ireland for those who can be treated curatively, and in the hope of restoring them to society, how much can be done to check the inroads of this disease. There is also the dispensary system, which is enormously interesting and important, and which will enable us to treat people who are in their own homes skillfully, and with all the arts of medicine, so that the chance of the disease spreading by contagion to other members of the family may be reduced. The Irish people want these things, and the Irish people within reasonable limits will be prepared, I doubt not, to rate themselves for them. I point out again that the subject has been already considered by competent persons and has received the support of all authorities and of the people to a most remarkable extent. Everyone is prepared to join in the campaign, from the simplest and the humblest of the population, and to have the local authorities invested with the means of organising and maintaining of a complete campaign against tuberculosis, which carries off so many thousands in Ireland. I agree there are many points of detail which require consideration, and if the House will give the Bill a Second Reading it will be desirable, I think, to allow it to be considered in Grand Committee. I do not think that at this period of the session it would be very easy to deal with it on the floor of the House. The course of sending the Bill to Grand Committee may possibly delay the passage of the Bill at this period of the session, but we should, I hope, take it up again in the autumn.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: May I ask whether the effect of the statement just made is that if the Bill were committed to Committee of the Whole House the right hon. Gentleman could not get it before the recess?

Mr. BIRRELL: That would depend, of course, upon the number of the Amendments, and I am rather disposed to think it would be very difficult at these hours of the night. If it goes to Grand Committee we could not get it till the autumn session.

Replying to Mr. NANNETTI—

Mr. BIRRELL said that it might be the best course to move that the matter be proceeded with in Committee of the Whole House. They could then see the number and character of the Amendments. Some of these might be dealt with by friendly intercourse without debate, and they might see what could be done in that way. He would, therefore, propose to move that the Committee stage be taken in Committee of the Whole House.

Mr. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks) regretted the right hon. Gentleman had not adhered to his original decision to proceed with the matter by means of Grand Committee. He now proposed to take the measure in Committee of the Whole House. In that case, he (Mr. Forster) hoped Members would be given time to put down Amendments, because there were undoubtedly points which would have to be carefully considered.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Birrell.*)

Whereupon Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty-eight minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 16*th July,* 1908.

FAIRFAX PEERAGE.

Petition of Albert Kirby Fairfax (claiming to be) Lord Fairfax of Cameron for leave to lodge his printed case; read, and ordered as prayed.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Saint Levan—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Sligo and Arigna Railway; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Ards Railways Bill ought to be dispensed with and the Bill allowed to proceed provided Clauses 79 and 81 be struck out unless proof be given before the Examiners that the Bill has been approved by the proprietors of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company present at a meeting called and held in accordance with Standing Order 64.

Read, and agreed to.

South West Suburban Water Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Ards Railways Bill.—Moved, That the order made on the 25th day of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2^a; agreed to; Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed for Tuesday next.

Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Moved, "That Standing Order No. 143 be considered and dispensed with in respect of the said Bill, and that the Bill be now read 3^a; agreed to; Bill read 3^a accordingly, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill; London United Tramways Bill, Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill—(Bradfield Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Willoughby de Broke and the Lord Colchester be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Elphinstone and the Lord Hindlip; read, and agreed to.

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): The Amendments proposed by the Committee made: Standing Committee negatived; the Report of Amendments to be received on Monday next.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894, AND WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1906.

Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, empowering certain officers in British Protectorates to take depositions respecting injuries received by a member of the crew of a British vessel who may be left behind in any of the Protectorates.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

FOREIGN JURISDICTION ACT, 1890.

Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, entitled "The Cyprus Courts of Justice Order, 1908."

FOREIGN JURISDICTION ACT, 1890, AND CONSULAR SALARIES AND FEES ACT, 1891.

Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, entitled "The China (Passenger Ship Fees) Order in Council, 1908."

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, approving a Memorial of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty praying sanction to the extension of the period of full-pay sick leave in certain cases and under certain conditions.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act) and ordered to lie on the Table.

OSBORNE.

Report of the House Governor and Medical Superintendent for the year to 31st March, 1908.

CARE AND CONTROL OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire concerning the care and control of the feeble-minded. Vol. III. Report.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904 (COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLACKPOOL).

Order made by the council of the county borough of Blackpool, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the county borough.

POLICE ACT, 1890.

Correspondence relative to the refusal of the Secretary of State's certificate under Section 17 (2) of the Act, to the Tyne River Police Force, for the year ended 29th September, 1907.

WINTER ASSIZES ACTS, 1876 AND 1877.

Seven Orders in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, relating to the ensuing Winter Assizes.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894, AND MERCHANT SHIPPING (MERCANTILE MARINE FUND) ACT, 1898.

Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, adding to the exemptions from light dues in the Second Schedule to the Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898.

BEE PEST (IRELAND) BILL. [No. 156.]
COSTS IN CRIMINAL CASES BILL. [No. 157.]

Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and to be printed.

TOBACCO GROWING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE EARL OF **CAMPERDOWN**: My Lords, this is a Bill to repeal the law which prohibits the growing of tobacco in Scotland. It also provides that the Commissioners of Inland Revenue may issue licences to persons to grow tobacco, and may state the places in which tobacco may be grown. The Bill is identical with the one which was passed for Ireland last year; and as, I believe, there is no objection to it on the part of the Government, I beg to move the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

LORD **DENMAN**: My Lords, there is no objection whatever on the part of the Government to the Bill which the noble Earl has just introduced. Therefore we cordially assent to the Second Reading.

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order): The amendments proposed by the Select Committee made: Standing Committee negatived: The Report of Amendments to be received on Monday next.

CORONERS (IRELAND) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

* THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: My Lords, the case for the Second Reading of this Bill is this. In England power is given for the appointment of deputy coroners. In Ireland we have no such power; and we ask that the sections in the English Act of 1892, which give this power, should be applied to Ireland. All I need draw attention to is that it is provided that the power shall be subject to the provisions of the Coroners Acts and to the law relating to coroners "in like manner" as to coroners.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Donoughmore.*)

LORD DENMAN: We have no objections whatever to the provisions of this Bill. In fact, we cordially assent to it. Under the existing law in Ireland a considerable difficulty arises owing to the absence of any enactment enabling a deputy coroner to be appointed. I understand that this Bill is to enable that to be done, and the Government offer no objection to the Second Reading.

LORD ASHBOURNE: I have no doubt the Bill is desirable. The only thing I will say is, that I think it may need examination at the next stage in order to see that adequate provision is made to secure that a fit deputy is appointed, and that the power which is reserved to remove a coroner should also apply to a deputy coroner under this Bill. Those, however, are matters for Committee. I do not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, this Bill is very simple in character, and its object is to amend Section 11 of the Savings Bank Act, 1904. The provision in that section has resulted in a considerable saving to the Exchequer through not having to transmit acknowledgments of deposits below the amount stated, and the object of this Bill is to enable the amount to be increased. The Bill provides that in the case of deposits not exceeding £1, or such higher maximum amount as may from time to time be fixed by regulations made by the Postmaster-General with the consent of the Treasury under the Post Office Savings Bank Acts, 1861 to 1904, the entry in the depositor's book shall be conclusive evidence of the depositor's claim to the repayment of the deposit, with the interest thereon, upon demand made by him on the Postmaster-General, and it shall not be necessary in such case to transmit any acknowledgment of the deposit by the Postmaster-General.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Granard.*)

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

CROFTING PARISHES (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to order). Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

SALE OF LANDS IN FIJI.

*LORD STANMORE rose to move for any further correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Fiji relating to the sale of certain lands in the Island of Viti Levu, in continuation of Papers laid before the House last year. The noble Lord said: My Lords, as I have reason to understand that His Majesty's Government do not object to the Motion I have brought forward, it is unnecessary for me to weary your Lordships by going at any length into my reasons for making it. I look forward to the Papers which are to be produced under it with more than usual interest, because I understand they contain a sharp criticism of my action thirty-five years ago with regard to the Native Land Tenure. But I am not going to discuss that matter now, or to raise any question about it. In the first place, the controversy would be entirely uninteresting to your Lordships. In the next place, I do not think much time need be spent in discussing the rather comic theory that half-a-dozen successive Governors of Fiji and half-a-dozen successive Secretaries of State, to say nothing of a host of other officials concerned in the matter, have taken for the last thirty-six years a wrong view of the Treaty of Cession, and, in the third place I have not the smallest apprehension that the noble Earl the Secretary of State will adopt this new-fangled theory that the natives of Fiji have no right in the land they hold, except such as the indulgence of the Crown may choose to give. I should not have alluded to the matter had it not been that I think I owe a duty to an excellent public servant who in past times, when I was Governor of Fiji, rendered invaluable service, and to whom I shall be always under obligation and grateful for the assistance then rendered; I mean Mr. David Wilkinson, who, I understand, has in some recent official utterances had his name coupled with mine in regard to what is now supposed to be my faulty action thirty-five years ago. I owe it to that gentleman to say that, whether my views were right or wrong, his is not, as has been represented, the maleficent influence which caused me to take the views referred to. Whatever the case may be, whether I was right or wrong, that gentleman—Mr. David Wilkinson—had no share in the forming of those opinions or in guiding my action. I have no doubt he agreed with my opinion, but, as a matter of fact, I had hardly any communication with him during the first year of my Governorship. My views of the Deed of Cession were founded on communication with those who negotiated it: the late Lord Rosmead and Commodore Goodenough on the one side, and Thakombau and the late Sir John Thurston on the other, and my views of native tenure were chiefly influenced by Sir John Thurston, that distinguished ethnologist Dr. Fison, Mr. Walter Carew, and others. Therefore, after what has been said about Mr. Wilkinson recently, I think it only right to state here in my place in Parliament that the accusation, though doubtless involuntarily so, is unjust and unfounded. My views with regard to the granting of the Treaty of Cession were formed on the evidence of those who took part in that Treaty; and to charge Mr. Wilkinson with my sins, whatever they may have been, is entirely mistaken and uncalled for.

"Moved, That an humble address be presented to His Majesty for further correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Fiji relating to the sale of certain lands in the Island of Viti Levu, in continuation of Papers laid before the House last year."—(*Lord Stanmore.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I need not detain your Lordships at any great length upon this important and interesting matter of the native lands in Fiji. It is a question which in this House the noble Lord on the cross benches has made practically his own, and that may be natural, considering the high position he held as Governor of the Colony. The noble Lord has alluded to what has happened in Fiji since the Treaty of Cession in the year 1874. There may be some dispute as to what the precise rights of the natives were over what were then known as the unoccupied lands. The lands were of three kinds—there were some which were already in the occupation of white settlers; there were other lands under actual cultivation by native communities; and there was a third class of lands which were quite unoccupied and as to which a certain degree of controversy has arisen. But that controversy is really only of historical interest, because it has been an undoubted fact that during the last thirty years the claims of the natives over those unoccupied lands have been both implicitly and explicitly admitted by governor after governor in statements made to the natives. That is fully admitted also by the present distinguished Governor of Fiji, who takes a different view from the noble Lord on the cross benches as to the historical merits of the case. He fully admits that in practice the rights of the natives over these unoccupied lands have been recognised over and over again. At the same time we have to bear in mind that it is very important that, so far as these lands are not used by or wanted for the native communities, they should be as far as possible developed in the interest of the islanders as a whole. That is a proposition which the noble Lord on the cross benches will not dispute. That development must, however, take place with full regard to the rights of the natives over these lands. An influential body of planters have recently presented a petition in which they ask that the lands in actual occupation by the natives should be delimited, and that all remaining lands should be declared to be the property of the Crown, and, as such, put up for public sale and purchased by anybody who desires to acquire them. That is a proposition which we cannot entertain. An alternative, made as a compromise, proposes that the lands necessary for the support of the natives should be delimited, and that the Government should have full power to alienate the unoccupied lands, but should allow two-thirds of the profits to go to the native community, and that lands granted by the tribal communities to individuals should be subject to the consent of the Governor in Council if it was proposed to lease or sell them. With this alternative proposition we do not find ourselves in complete agreement. We take the view that the tenure of these lands has been essentially communal, and that in no circumstances is it desirable that an individual native should be in a position to sell the land and pocket the money. We also hold that the natives do possess full interest in the unoccupied land, but we quite agree that, with the consent of the Council and the chiefs, some of the land immediately required for occupation should be leased on terms to those willing to develop it, but only in exceptional cases should the native land be allowed to be sold at all. When the lands are leased or, in rare cases, sold, the money should be, in our opinion, held in trust for the benefit of the existing community and their successors. That is to say, the advantage to be derived from the development of the land by Europeans should, so far as possible, be wholly reserved for the benefit of the community and not of the individual. I would merely say, in conclusion, that there is no objection whatever to printing further Papers on the subject; and I think it is quite true, as the noble Lord on the cross benches has stated, that he will find in those Papers some observations reflecting on his own views on this matter, to which I hope he will not find it necessary to take very serious exception.

LORD STANMORE: My Lords, if I had known that the noble Earl was going to make a full explanation of the land policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Fiji on this occasion, I am afraid I should hardly have been so indulgent to your Lordships, but should have thought it necessary to go more fully into the matter. That I shall not do now. I merely thank the noble Earl for promising further Papers, and for the very interesting speech he has made, with the general tenor of which I entirely agree.

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

PROPOSED SANATORIUM AT STREAMHILL.

*LORD CASTLETOWN: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government the rather long string of Questions standing in my name, viz.: (1) What evidence was tendered before the Local Government Board Committee of Enquiry with regard to the proposed sanatorium at Streamhill which warranted the Board in stating they would not withhold sanction of a loan? *See* letter, 16th March, 1908. (2) Whether it is a fact that the two arbitrators appointed to decide the conflicting views of the ratepayers were the same gentlemen who approved the site in the first instance, and whether this is considered a proper form of arbitration? (3) Whether the views of the ratepayers have been obtained as to the heavy expenditure proposed? (4) Whether any real practical medical expert on tuberculosis has examined the proposed site? (5) Whether it is not a fact that all experts now agree that temporary wooden houses, and not stone buildings, are the proper types for use in sanatoria; and whether the Local Government Board will protect the ratepayers by having this question investigated by competent authorities before any unnecessary or additional expenditure is incurred? (6) Whether the purported gift of land does not contain peculiar legal provisions as to resumption, and whether these provisions have been fully considered by the Board or their legal representative?

In putting these Questions I should ike to say a few words explanatory of my reasons for doing so. Those who are acting with me in this matter have no wish to prevent proper sanatoria for consumptive patients being built in any portion of Ireland. We are most anxious to see the work now being carried on in Ireland so well against tuberculosis carried on to the fullest extent. But at the same time we desire to prevent, so far as possible, the ratepayers' money being wasted in schemes which may be neither suitable nor advisable. The story of how the question arose is a very simple one. An Act was passed some few years ago which enabled the county council of any part of Ireland to appoint what were called joint hospital boards, and, once they were appointed, they were prepared to spend any sum of money which was considered fair by the county council in building sanatoria for consumptive patients. The effect has been that in some parts of Ireland, I believe in two parts, very proper places have been selected, and, I believe, fairly successful sanatoria have been started. In the district with which I am dealing, where we desired to protect as much as possible the interests of the ratepayers, we considered that the joint hospital board did not act very wisely. They selected what we considered, and are informed by medical officers to be, improper places for sanatoria for consumptive patients; and are also preparing to waste the ratepayers' money in erecting a stone building which is unsuitable, as we are informed, on the best possible authority, that these sanatoria should all be wooden erections and capable of being destroyed after the lapse of a certain number of years. Therefore, I feel I am acting in the interests of the ratepayers in the county of Cork in putting these questions; and I would ask the Government to give us some information on the subject.

Lord DENMAN: My noble friend has raised a question of considerable importance, at all events locally; and perhaps, with the permission of the House, I may be allowed to give a short history of the matter. In the year 1904 it was represented to the Local Government Board in Ireland that there was urgent need for a sanatorium in the county of Cork; and the Local Government Board, by a Provisional Order confirmed by Parliament, authorised the formation of a joint board consisting of representatives of the sanitary authorities in the county of Cork and of the Cork Corporation for the purpose of providing a sanatorium for the county. As I have no doubt many Members of this House are aware, it is a very difficult thing to obtain a site for a hospital for either infectious or contagious disease. The residents in the district invariably enter strong objection; and frequently it is necessary to seek compulsory powers. The joint board had before it schemes for two sites, but such strenuous opposition was offered to either of those sites being adopted that the Local Government Board did not consider themselves justified in allowing the matter to go further.

Mr. Brasier Creagh then came forward and himself offered to provide a site for a sanatorium. Now, when a free gift is made of a site it is not necessary, I understand, to ask the sanction of the Local Government Board. It is true the Local Government Board have power whereby they can block such a scheme going forward; but, looking to the fact that it was impossible, or extremely difficult, to obtain a site without compulsory powers, and looking to the fact that this was a free gift, the Local Government Board considered that it would be a rather high-handed action on their part were they to prevent its going forward. Then, when this offer had been made by Mr. Brasier Creagh, a committee was appointed by the joint board, consisting, no doubt, of men most competent to deal with the subject. This committee, with their sanitary engineer, inquired into the question of the site, and reported unanimously in favour of it. After that, the Chief Engineering Inspector, Mr. Cowan, and the Medical Inspector, Dr. Biggar, of the Local Government Board, went down and made an inspection of the site; on their advice the Local Government Board authorised an inquiry being held into the matter.

The inquiry, I may say, was held by Mr. Cowan and Dr. Biggar, and notice that it was to be held was advertised in newspapers circulating throughout the county. In the notice all the ratepayers were invited to attend and to make any objection to the loan being sanctioned. At the inquiry evidence was given for and against this particular proposal; and I may say that although the Local Government Board were not directly called upon to approve of the site, the inspectors thought it better not to exclude evidence upon that point; and, accordingly, they gave every opportunity to witnesses for stating their views on that matter. The only professional evidence given against the scheme was that of Dr. Corby, Professor of Midwifery in Queen's College, Cork, who, however, admitted that he had not seen the site before he gave evidence on the question. It is only fair, however, to Dr. Corby to say that he has since seen the site, and has furnished a report supporting the conclusion he arrived at before he had seen the site. The only other professional evidence was that of Mr. Hall, a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. No doubt the opinion of a veterinary surgeon is of great value upon this as upon all other points. The Local Government Board had to consider the professional evidence for and against. On the one hand they had the committee of the joint board, with their sanitary engineer; they had the evidence of their own medical expert and their own inspecting sanitary engineer. Against those, they had the evidence of the Queen's College professor who had not seen the site, and the evidence of a veterinary surgeon from Cork. I submit that in view of the nature of the evidence it was impossible for the Local Government Board to do otherwise than to sanction the loan of £12,000 for the erection of the hospital buildings.

Now, perhaps, I had better answer categorically the other questions that my noble friend has put. The first, I think, I have already dealt with. Then, the second question he asks is whether it is a fact that the two arbitrators appointed to decide the conflicting views of the ratepayers were the same gentlemen who approved the site in the first instance, and whether this is considered a proper form of arbitration. My noble friend, I am informed, is not correct in referring to the two inspectors as arbitrators. The inquiry was not in the nature of an arbitration. The function of the inspectors was to receive evidence tendered at the inquiry, and to report upon it. Then I come to the third question, whether the views of the ratepayers have been obtained as to the expenditure proposed. The ratepayers were invited to attend and give evidence at the inquiry of which I have spoken. Then, there is Question 4, whether really any practical medical expert on tuberculosis has examined the proposed site. In answer to that, the Local Government Board say they are satisfied that no additional evidence is necessary as regards suitability of the proposed site. Now, I come to Question 5. I am bound to say that I am just a little surprised at the form in which my noble friend has placed that Question on the Paper. He asks whether it is not a fact that "all experts now agree." My experience is that I have never known experts to agree upon any subject whatever; and the answer I would give to him would be a direct negative. But I believe the prevailing opinion among medical men is that some of the buildings, at all events, should be of a temporary as opposed to a permanent character. The Local Government Board, in their letter of March 16th, state that they require the plans of the building amended, with a view to securing economy, and the loan will not be finally sanctioned until the Board are satisfied that the plans are suitable.

In answer to Question 6, with regard to the gift of land containing peculiar legal provisions, the Local Government Board say that the deed conveying the site does contain some conditions which are unusual, but the Board are satisfied that they are not unreasonable. I hope I have shown that the ratepayers' money will not be wasted, as the noble Lord appears to fear, and that every care was taken before this site was chosen. I can assure him that everything will be done to secure that the proposed sanatorium shall be erected in conformity with the most modern regulations and requirements.

*LORD CASTLETOWN: My Lords, I am sorry to trespass further upon your Lordships' indulgence. I thank the noble Lord for so kindly and exhaustively answering my Questions. But there are one or two points upon which I think I ought to clear myself. Question 2 I put because I think it is a very remarkable fact, and the Local Government

Board should bear it in mind in the future, that the Cork inspectors who were sent down to examine this land, which we know to be absolutely unsuitable for a sanatorium, were the same men who were appointed to hear the objections of the ratepayers to their own Report. That may be a very Irish proceeding, but I do not think it is a very proper one. We asked that other experts should be brought down to hear our objections, and we would have procured a great deal more evidence than my noble friend has cited if we had been treated in a proper manner by the two gentlemen who were acting, as we call it, as arbitrators on this question. But, naturally, when we came before the two men who were pledged to a particular site and to a particular scheme, it was very difficult for us to make our objections felt. With regard to Question 5, as to the agreement of experts, I can only indorse what the noble Lord had said, that experts do not always agree. But there is a general consensus of opinion that temporary wooden houses, and not stone buildings, are the proper types for sanatoria. With regard to the gift of land, I want to say, and I say it with all deference to the gentlemen who made this munificent gift, that there is in this legal document a very remarkable clause. The clause is that if any consumptive patient goes outside the wall enclosure round this land during treatment at the sanatorium, the gift will be null and void, and will revert to the donor. That, I venture to say, is a very remarkable legal arrangement; and I would ask my noble friend to suggest to the Local Government Board that they should look into the question of this deed of gift. It is not for me to say more on the question. I know there is a very strong feeling in our district on the subject; and I say, from the absolute knowledge of experts who have been over the ground and from the common-sense knowledge of any human being who knows anything at all about consumption, that a more unsuitable spot could not have been chosen. It is boggy, cold, clayey land facing all the wildest winds from the Atlantic; and I hope the Local Government Board, before they absolutely complete the arrangement, will look seriously into the question of the site.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD rose "To call attention to the state of the Territorial Army on 1st July, 1908, and to the Report of the Director of Recruiting for 1907, and to the statement showing the number of recruits enlisted for the Special Reserve between the 15th January and 16th May, 1908 [Cd. 3935]." The noble Duke said: My Lords, I beg to call attention to the state of the Territorial Army on July 1st. In estimating the present value of the Territorial Army it is necessary to remember that His Majesty's Government has bestowed that force upon the country, not as an additional force, but in substitution for, first, the whole Militia and the whole Militia system destroyed; secondly, in place of 100,000 Volunteers and Yeomanry, for that is the difference between the strength of those forces given in the Annual Report of the British Army for 1908, and the numbers of the Territorial Army on the 1st July; and, finally, in exchange for great reductions in the Regular Army and its Reserves.

Let me say at once that I attach far more importance to the effect which the recent Territorial and Reserve Forces Act may produce on the Regular Army than to any influence it may have on the Territorial Force. The fighting efficiency of the Regular Army has been impaired by the loss of many excellent Reserve-creating *cadres*, and its strength will be further diminished by the shattering of its present recruiting system. The Director of Recruiting comments, in paragraph 63 of his Report for 1907, on the changes which that Act may make in the future of recruiting. He writes—

> "The changes which must necessarily take place in the future in consequence of the legislation enacted by the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907, may affect recruiting materially. It may be found, for instance, that by the abolition of the Garrison Artillery Militia, Garrison Artillery recruits may be harder to obtain. It is possible that in some areas the formation of the Territorial Associations may materially assist in popularising the Army and aid recruiting. On the other hand, large reductions have been made in the Permanent Staff of the present Auxiliary Forces which will in themselves reduce the numbers of recruiters throughout the United Kingdom. Experience only can show what changes and modifications will have to be made in future to meet the new conditions of affairs."

The number of recruits obtained for the Regular Army in the year 1907 was

34,916. Of this number the Militia Permanent Staff enlisted directly for the Regular Army 11,752, and for the Militia 15,034. Last year 12,113 men transferred from the Militia to the Regular Army, all of whom had been obtained by the Militia Permanent Staff. We find, then, that in 1907 the Militia Permanent Staff raised 23,865 men for the Regular Army. Thus nearly three-quarters of the recruits for the Regular Army were obtained by the Militia Permanent Staff. It is a fact that the Militia Permanent Staff is, and has been for many years, the chief recruiting agency for the Army. It follows that if great changes are made in the Permanent Staff of the Militia great differences must result in recruiting for the Regular Army. In 1907 there were 2,232 non-commissioned Officers of the Militia Permanent Staff actively engaged in recruiting duties throughout the United Kingdom.

The whole duty of the Militia Permanent Staff, when it has been converted into the Staff of the Special Reserve, will be confined to drilling small squads of Special Reservists on the barrack square, and as each squad will be in a different stage of instruction many instructors will be required. The impossibility of the Permanent Staff being on the barrack square and at the same time engaged in recruiting work was apparent to the Army Council. They therefore ordered that two non-commissioned officers from every third Special Reserve battalion should be sent out recruiting, all the remainder being wanted for duties in barracks. The net result, then, is that instead of the Militia Permanent Staff amounting to 2,232 non-commissioned officers all engaged on recruiting duties during eleven months of the year, there will now be, according to the new regulations, 148 sergeants on the staff of the Special Reserve employed for that purpose. Now 148 recruiting agents cannot possibly give the same results as 2,232. That is what the Director of Recruiting means when he alludes to—

> "Large reductions in the Permanent Staff of the Auxiliary Forces which will in themselves reduce the number of recruiters throughout the United Kingdom."

I ask the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State if any arrangements have been made to replace the Regular Army's Recruiting Staff, or if it is not considered necessary to trouble about recruiting for the Regular Army because we are now blessed with a Territorial Army on paper?

You cannot look to the Permanent Staff of the Territorial Army to recruit for the Regular Army. The Permanent Staff of the Territorial Army is less than that of the Volunteers and of the Yeomanry. By the Recruiting Return for 1907 I see that the Volunteer Permanent Staff raised 3,168 men for the Regular Army, and the Permanent Staff of the Yeomanry raised sixty-two men for the Regular Army. At present the whole of their energies are required for bringing their own force into existence. No doubt there are the County Associations. There is an idea, founded on I know not what, that in some mysterious manner these County Associations are to be of enormous benefit to the Regular Army in the matter of recruiting. For instance, in the Report of the Director of Recruiting we read—

> "It is possible that in some areas the formation of the Territorial Associations may materially assist in popularising the Army and aid recruiting."

Again, I read in a paper written by the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State on the duties of County Associations, the following—

> "In that I include the advantage that should accrue from being linked up more closely with the Regular Army, the greater sympathy between the Regular and citizen forces which must come with assimilation of system and organisation."

I am not sure that I follow the meaning of the noble Lord, and I therefore ask him to explain how the sysmpathy will assist the County Associations in recruiting for the Army? "An ounce of practice is worth all the dry theory in the world." The noble Lord will recognise that sentence as another quotation from his own writings. Let me give him my ounce of practice in recruiting for the Army through the Militia, as I knew it. Perhaps he will tell me, in return, how I can in future help the Regular Army through the County Association, now that the Militia has been abolished.

First of all I used to have, not two, but ten or twelve non-commissioned officers out on recruiting duties, and that in a small county. When the recruits were assembled for preliminary drill, I used to send them home to their villages, from Saturday to Monday, smartly dressed, and with their pay in their pockets. Then I asked them to bring others back with them, and this they did, thus making every recruit into a recruiter. I urged them to bring their friends and relatives to see the manner of life which was led in barracks. By means of the local Press I informed parents that, when visiting barracks, if they saw anything to which they, as parents, objected, I hoped they would at once directly communicate with me. A large number of the men's friends and relations were constantly visiting the barracks. This ounce of practice, so well said to be worth all the dry theory in the world, consists of the commanding officer dealing personally with the recruit, the recruit returning home, and there himself acting as a recruiter, and the friends and relatives of the men coming from their homes into barracks. The recruit, if he had a fancy for Regular soldering could go the Regular Army, and many went; if he preferred Militia soldiering he was free to remain in the Militia. If he disliked both he could buy his discharge with his bounty at the end of the training, and put ten shillings in his pocket as well. Above all, he knew he could make his own choice and would never be trapped into doing what he did not wish or intend.

My experience of the past two winters training of the Militia recruits is that voluntary enlistment conducted on the lines I described would give you a Regular first line and a Militia second line, but enlisted for foreign service, closely connected, mutually dependent, and numerically sufficient. But the Government will have none of it. They look to the Territorial Army and the County Associations as the future foundation of our military system. Now, will the noble Lord tell me the practice, not the dry theory, of the aid which members of the County Associations can give recruiting for the Regular Army? There is no such thing as recruit training for the Territorial Army carried on in barracks, and the men of the Regular and Territorial Army are so different in stamp, conditions, and employment, that it is impossible to bring them together as the men of the Militia and Line used to be brought. For my own part I believe that the advantages which may accrue to the Regular Army in Great Britain from County Associations to be *nil*, and I must be right in the case of Ireland, because Ireland is excluded from the Territorial Force.

It is clear from the paragraph I have first quoted from the Report of the Director of Recruiting, that he considers that the recruiting system for the Regular Army has, like much else, gone into the general melting pot, and that we must wait and see what may come out. We are now half way through the year, and can begin to discern some of the results. From the statement relating to recruiting for the Special Reserve in the first quarter of this year we can compare recruiting for the Militia in the corresponding period of 1907. In the first place, in Great Britain between the 15th January and the 16th May of this year, during the best quarter of the year for recruiting, for the Special Reserve Infantry, 6,389 recruits were taken. During the corresponding period of last year for the Militia Infantry, 9,110 recruits were taken. That is a drop of 2,721 infantry recruits in Great Britain in the best recruiting quarter of the year. In the case of Ireland the falling off is much greater. The figures there are: Recruits for the Special Reserve Infantry, 495; for the corresponding period in last year for Militia Infantry 1,697—a drop of 1,202.

Last year showed a decrease in recruiting for the Militia of only 156 for all arms in the United Kingdom, but the Government have achieved for their Special Reserve in the first quarter of this year a drop of 4,545 for all arms. Now this drop has come about when the full recruiting staff of 2,232 were at work, whereas at the end of this summer there will only be 148 recruiting agents available, which makes a further drop inevitable. I have no doubt I shall be told that recruiting for the Regular Army has not fallen off. Well, why should it, because the Permanent Staff of the Militia will not be reduced until the end of this summer? Again, it is in the matter of transfers from the Militia to the Army that the Army must lose heavily when the Militia has been abolished. It is a certain loss of 12,000 men for the Army next year. Every man now in the Special Reserve has taken £2 to stay out of the Army for a year, and the remainder of the Militia have gone. But for a year at least the results of the abolition of the Militia on the strength of the Regular Army need not be revealed.

Recruiting for the Special Reserve does not and will not interfere or compete with recruiting for the Regular Army for the simple reason that a younger, a weaker, and an inferior class of boy is taken for the Special Reserve. It is essential for the existence of the Regular Infantry that every Special Reserve recruit on attaining Army standard should be passed into the Army. Consequently, bounties are offered to Special Reserve recruits to join the Army and rewards to non-commissioned officers to promote their transfer. It is too early yet to ask for any Return of Special Reservists joining the Regular Army, because they must have served in the Special Reserve for three months before they are allowed to join the Army, but from my own knowledge and from all accounts I have heard from Militia Officers every Special Reserve recruit who has become qualified for the Army has joined the Army. A Line recruit used to be kept at the depot for three months before he joined his Line battalion. Now a Special Reserve recruit is kept at the depot for three months, and, if up to Army standard, is sent to the Line with a bounty of 30s. at the end of three months. If not fit in three months, then at the end of six months; and finally, if still physically unfit for the Army, he is posted to the Special Reserve to form with his fellows of like quality the backbone of the British Infantry when mobilised for war. I should like to ask the Government if they are satisfied that a Reserve for the Regular Army composed of boys and men whose presence in that Reserve is due to their unfitness to serve in the Army, is a sound piece of military re-organisation.

We are told in an Army Memorandum on the military forces of the United Kingdom, dated February, 1907, that—

> "On mobilisation, including the numbers required to meet wastage for six months, nearly 3,500 officers and 75,000 men would be required for the Special Contingent. The bulk of these men will receive six months' recruit training."

That is more than a year ago, and we have heard very little about the Special Contingent lately. Could the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State say if there is any prospect of obtaining these 3,500 officers and 75,000 men? They are part of the first line and are absolutely essential to the expeditionary force.

One more question as to the non-combatant branches of the Special Reserve. We were informed in the Army Order of 23rd December last, that—

> "The conditions under which officers and men of this category will join the Special Reserve will be published hereafter."

The noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War, in the same note from which I have already quoted, writes—

> "Think of an Army Service Corps whose drivers came from Pickfords, whose butchers from Smithfield, whose bakers from Spikings, and the men who serve out the grocery rations from Fortnum and Masons."

—a charming and imaginative picture. But can the noble Lord say if any progress has been made in its realisation?

Page 4 of the statement of recruiting for the Special Reserve gives the strength—that is, the number of men actually serving on the 1st January last—of the twenty-three disbanded Militia Battalions as 10,307 men. Of these 10,307, 4,632 have joined the Special Reserve, and the rest have taken a free discharge or remained Militiamen till time expired—a loss of 5,675 men. It seems to me that the Government may now rely on one half, or perhaps rather more than one half, of the Infantry Militia accepting the £2 bounty and joining the Special Reserve. The strength of the Militia Infantry in 1907 is given as 76,473, which should give 40,000 Special Infantry Reservists. But it must be remembered that this balance of men obtained from the Militia at a cost of £80,000 are subject to rapid waste. For instance, many would have joined the Line in their first or second year of service, but having taken the £2 they must stay out of the Line for a year. Many of my own men who took the £2 are now asking to be allowed to join the Army, but cannot refund the £2. Others have joined the Special Reserve because they have but a short time to serve before getting their discharge. They are ready enough to take the £2 and chance it for a couple of years. This balance, then, is a dwindling balance and in two years time it will become a negligible quantity. If the numbers of the Special Reserve are to be maintained that can only be effected by recruiting, and the failure for recruiting for the Special Reserve during the first quarter of this year is apparent by the Return now rendered. What will be more serious than the failure of the Special Reserve will be the effect of the abolition of the chief recruiting agency for the Regular Army, which will render the collapse of recruiting for the Regular Forces certain. But that, again, need not appear for a year.

The Militia Commanding Officers have always advised the War Office that they would not be able to enlist men in sufficient numbers—that is the point, sufficient numbers—for foreign service under the conditions proposed for the Special Reserve. As regards transfers, it appears probable that the Army Council will obtain half, or rather more than half, of the Militia now serving, which means that 40 per cent. of the Force will be lost. Undoubtedly, without the costly inducement of the £2 bounty no men would have transferred from the Militia to the Special Reserve. Many Governments have resorted to bounties in time of need. It will get you the men for the moment, but it is a hateful system. It means that you go with money in your hand to a man, in this case a poor man, and persuade him by means of a bribe to risk taking conditions of service which he would not, and in many cases ought not to, accept. It also promotes the practice of a zealous commanding officer advising the man to take the bounty and sign the paper and not bother about the contents, saying that he is himself bound by the same conditions which make no difference to him. True, no doubt, as far as the officer is concerned, but too often untrue in the case of the man. The unsoundness of the plan is that the men taking the bounty soon become time-expired. In this case the Government may spend £50,000, or they may spend £100,000, according to the number of men they get, it does not matter which, because the Force vanishes at the end of two years never to be replaced. It is, no doubt, advantageous for the moment for the Army Council to say we always knew we could get 50,000 men from the Militia for the Special Reserve, but then they should in fairness add we have got them at a cost of £100,000 and in a couple of years we shall lose them.

The creation of the Special Reserve means the transfer of some thousands of men from the Militia to the Special Reserve at a cost of £2 per head, who will disappear in two years time, and an immediate drop in recruiting of 4,545 of all arms in the first and best recruiting quarter of the year. It means the loss of several hundred capable and experienced officers, who are not anxious to resign but are not allowed to remain as Militia officers and whom the Government have no chance of replacing. It means a loss of 892 non-commissioned officers to the first line, due to the disbandment of twenty-three Militia battalions, and the reduction in the permanent staff of 101 Militia battalions transferred to the Special Reserve, and the abolition of 101 depot sergeant-majors. It means the discharge of some 30,000 men. It means the final break up of the whole Militia system and of all Militia traditions and regimental spirit. It is the disappearance of a force which found 120,000 men for the purposes of the past war, went abroad a month after war was declared, and was our only military force capable of providing complete units of itself for active service. You cannot dispense with a force of that kind without creating a dangerous gap in Imperial defence.

Last year I urged the Government to leave the Militia as a force in being for two years, whilst the Territorial Army was in process of formation. But they then considered that two years was too long. One year, we were assured, was amply sufficient to get the Territorial Army perfectly ready to march on guard, and relieve the Militia and take over all their duties. The Militia is gone. But I gather from numerous interviews granted by the Secretary of State for War to members of the Press that the right hon. Gentleman is at present of the opinion that it is unreasonable to expect to form the Territorial Army under two years. The Secretary of State informed us last year that the third line, the Volunteers, were to become the second line in place of the Militia abolished, and consequently to undertake the duties, training, and conditions of second line troops. Let me say at once that I do not wish to disparage the service of men in the Volunteers or in the Territorial Army. I fully recognise that their patriotism far surpasses that of their fellows. My opinion, expressed last year, was that the Government cannot get second line training and duties from third line men, and my contention this year is that the failure to obtain sufficient numbers for the Territorial Army under these conditions shows that my opinion was correct.

You will remember that the Territorial Army was to have come into existence on the 31st March last. But so long as the conditions and training necessary for second line troops were insisted upon no men would join or transfer. So the Government decided to abandon the fifteen days camp, the four years enlistment, and all the other conditions pertaining to troops of the second line, and to offer conditions of service even more indulgent than they were in the Volunteers. The Financial Secretary to the War Office, in a letter to *The Times*, wrote—

> "There is no hard and fast compulsory attendance at camp for eight days or fifteen. No one will be fined for non-attendance if there is a good reason."

You cannot make a third line into a second with these conditions of service.

The strength of the Territorial Army on 1st July is given at 173,351 men and 8,326 officers. That is below establishment by 128,848 men and 3,049 officers. The establishment of the Territorial Infantry is fixed at 194,727 men and 5,863 officers. On July 1st (in round numbers) of these, 112,000 men and 4,747 officers had been obtained, mostly by transfer from the serving Volunteers, leaving some 83,000 men and 1,116 officers to be raised by recruiting. Last year for the Volunteer Infantry 49,914 recruits were obtained. Let us say 40,000 for the purposes of calculation. In order to complete the proposed establishment of the Territorial Infantry in this year's time the Volunteer intake of recruits must be doubled. Now the Government must allow that the conditions of service in the Territorial Army have proved themselves far less attractive than in the Volunteers. In addition, you must allow for wastage. Last year the Volunteers, numbering, in round numbers, 180,000, gave a wastage of 40,000 men. Therefore the 112,000 Territorial soldiers would show a wastage of 25,000. A shortage of 83,000 plus 25,000 for wastage equals 108,000. But 78,000 are enlisted in the Infantry for one year only on the old Volunteer conditions and a promise of a free discharge at the end of the year. This body of men will give an extraordinary wastage at the end of their year's service for which extra allowance must be made.

Assuming that half of these one-year men claim their free discharge, that would be 39,000. Therefore for ordinary wastage allow 25,000, for extraordinary wastage 39,000, and 83,000 short of establishment; this shows that 147,000 recruits are required during the coming year to bring the Territorial Infantry up to establishment. The County Associations must raise 13,000 recruits for the Territorial Infantry per month for a whole year. Last month, after the most special appeals on the part of the Government, 6,000 recruits were obtained. That number must be more than doubled for every month for a year to complete the Infantry establishment, and there are more than 1,000 officers to be obtained. Now will the failure to find these recruits and officers rest on the County Associations or is it to rest on His Majesty's Government? The establishment for the Territorial Army I understand to be the minimum, consistent with safety, having regard to the reductions in the Army and the abolition of the Militia. But if it is impossible to come anywhere near that minimum what happens to the safety? Possibly the Goverment who are responsible for the safety will inform us.

The Infantry of the Territorial Army now number 112,000 on paper. But what will be their field strength? The Annual Return of the Volunteer corps shows that there are 28½ per cent. of the men in the Volunteers under twenty years of age. It may be said, Why deduct boys of under twenty when it is a case of home service? The answer is that the whole reason for the existence of the Territorial Army, as stated by the Secretary of State for War, is not only to meet, but also to beat, possible raiders from the Continent. It is certain that if any invaders do come from the Continent they will not be untrained and immature boys. The persons who come will be seasoned men and soldiers. No one would suggest that it was possible to beat a carefully selected first line Army of trained soldiers with a third line force having 28½ per cent. of untrained boys in its ranks. So that boys must be deducted from the strength of the Territorial Army before it takes the field to repel the foreign foe.

In 1905 a partial medical examination of the Volunteer Force, not at all of a severe character, showed that out of 180,000 serving Volunteers examined 29,000 were medically unfit; that is, 15 per cent. All the 29,000 unfit men were retained in the Force, and many are now, no doubt, in the Territorial Army, because for the Volunteer who transfers to the Territorial Army no medical examination is required. I cannot accept the contention that unfit men have not been allowed to transfer from the Volunteers to the Territorial Army in view of the fact that all medical examination has been expressly prohibited in the case of transfers from the Volunteers. We must deduct 16 per cent. on account of physical unfitness. On embodiment for permanent service a margin must be allowed for absentees. For my own part I have always maintained that it will be impossible to embody the Territorial Army because it is composed of precisely the same men who could not, when called Volunteers, owing to the circumstances of their civilian life, give two months of consecutive service during the South African War. I have often asked the question, but I have never yet got an answer. Why should the Volunteers, because they are now called Territorial soldiers, have changed all the conditions of their civilian life and be able to give that embodied service in 1910 which they were not able to do in 1900?

The Volunteer is being constantly exhorted by the War Office to transfer to the Territorial Army because his duties will be just the same as when a Volunteer. The Government may make that true in peace, but it cannot be made true in war. The noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War, describing the functions of the new second line army, writes—

> "In the first place it accepts the whole responsibility for home defence, and in the second place, if there is need for expansion of the forces in the field, it is asked to volunteer in companies or even in whole units for service at the front."

The Duke of Bedford.

These are entirely new duties which never belonged in the past to the Volunteers. We can see that the Territorial soldier is meant to be a third line man in peace, but a second line man in war. For instance, it is said that because the Volunteers have never been embodied since their formation consequently the Territorial soldier need not be apprehensive of embodied service. But the Volunteer was a third line man, and the Territorial soldier is a second line man, and there is the difference. The Volunteers, being third line troops, have never been embodied, but it is due to the fact that the Militia, the second line, has always stood between them and embodiment, so long as they were the third line, and also because the only time when it was proposed to call them out on permanent service it was found impossible to do so.

I read in the paper written by the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War on the County Associations and their work, as follows—

> "If the Territorial Army had existed in the nineteenth century it would certainly have been embodied during the Napoleonic wars. It would also, according to the Act, have been embodied after the events of 1899 in South Africa. So I am only talking now of what occurs at most once in a generation."

I take it that the meaning of the noble Lord is that after the battle of Waterloo the Territorial Army would not have been embodied until the South African War. I do not admit that that is true of a second line into which the Government have now converted the Volunteers.

Under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, by the calling out of the Army Reserve the whole Territorial Force is automatically embodied. It is said that the whole Army Reserve must be first called out. Now it is certain that any war with a civilised power will necessitate the calling out of the whole Army Reserve and the whole Special Reserve—that is, if the Special Reserve ever comes into existence. Take from the Crimean War in 1854 to the South African War in 1899; assume that the second line, the Militia, was non-existent as it now is; assume also that the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act was then in operation, and that the Territorial Army was the only Force supplementary to the

Regular Army. Then the Territorial Force would have been called out on permanent service on the following occasions:—first, during the Crimean War; secondly, during the Indian Mutiny; thirdly, in 1877, when all the Army and Militia Reserve were called out during the Russo-Turkish War; fourthly, in 1885, when the Reserves of the Army were called out and there was a partial Militia embodiment; and finally, during the South African War; when it would have been embodied for upwards of two years and required to serve abroad within a month of the declaration of war. That is to say, five times in fifty-five years, or an average of once in eleven years.

By Clause 10 of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act every man enlisted into the Territorial Army is enlisted under the Army Act, and is an enlisted soldier, subject to the same severe penalties as men of the Regular Forces. Therefore any man absent on embodiment can be apprehended and thrown into prison. For my own part, I doubt whether any Government could imprison a man of the Territorial Force for absence on embodiment, and whether they could imprison him for leaving his regiment and staying absent at home after serving for a short time on permanent service. It is obvious that many men in the Territorial Army cannot give permanent service—men employed in arsenals, in dockyards, and on railways, bank clerks, and men employed in houses of business, to say nothing of married men. I understand that the Admiralty would have first claim on all Territorial soldiers employed in arsenals and dockyards in case of embodiment. Then why enlist such men? On the embodiment of the Territorial Infantry we must deduct $28\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for men under twenty, 16 per cent. for men physically unfit—these are official figures—and I suggest the very low figure of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for absentees. In other words, 50 per cent. of the Territorial Infantry will not be available for field service on embodiment. So 112,000 comes down to 56,000, and of these 56,000 two-thirds are enlisted for one year only, and under the distinct understanding that they are to serve under more indulgent conditions for their last year than they have ever done before. It is, of course, possible for the Government definitely to abandon all second line conditions of training and preserve precisely the same conditions as obtained in the Volunteers, but that will not meet the point of embodied service. I am glad to think that we have at last ceased to regard any military force from a purely peace point of view. We look at all our military forces now from the point of view of war. It is only just becoming clear to the country that the Militia is destroyed, because the disbandment is seen in actual operation, and that in consequence the third line must, as the Secretary of State told us last year, take the place of the old second line abolished. It is useless for a man to join the Territorial Force unless he is prepared to give prolonged permanent service, which the Volunteer need not have contemplated.

The present field strength of the Territorial Infantry may be taken as 56,000. The fighting efficiency we can judge of from the Report of the Norfolk Commission on the Volunteers—and we are dealing now with the same men and the same conditions of training. That Commission reported that:—

> "Taking the Force as a whole, neither the musketry nor the tactical training of the rank and file would enable it to face with a prospect of success, the troops of a Continental Army."

That is not to the discredit of the Volunteers. No third line force can be equal, on short notice, to a picked Regular force. That is why the Territorial Army, if ever we get it, will be so hopelessly unfitted for the very purpose for which it was called into existence, namely, to meet and beat the best Continental troops. Let us recognise frankly that the new organisation means a weakened first line, no troops of the second line, and a third line which may or may not be formed.

Finally, this body of 112,000 men, with a field strength of 56,000 and a fighting efficiency described by the Royal Commission, will be absolutely the only body of Infantry left to us outside the Regular Army. But whatever may be our military weakness at present, we shall be far weaker in a year's time. In the first place, 78,000 of the Territorial Infantry have been induced to transfer for one year only, and on third line conditions of training. We were told that this plan had been adopted in order that Volunteers who transferred might give the new system a fair trial for one year, and see how they liked it. But this is precisely what they are not doing. They are not trying the new system. They have told you they do not like it, and will not have anything to do with it. They are serving under the old system, *plus* a promise of easier and more indulgent conditions than they ever served under before and a free discharge at the end of the year. Is it likely that they will take second line conditions of training at the end of this year for four years, having just refused to serve under them as a trial for one year?

At the end of the year two courses are open to the Government. First, to insist on the four years term of enlistment, and on the training conditions first proposed, by which the third line was to be rendered an efficient second line. In this case you will lose most of the men you have retained for one year on third line conditions. I strongly urge this course, because there can be no further idea about the Territorial Army as a second line. But what I anticipate is that you are going to tell the men that they may continue in the Territorial Army on more indulgent terms of service than they ever had in the Volunteers. This course would be perfectly consistent with the great principle of the Territorial Force, namely, that it is not meant to be available for garrison duties until six months after the declaration of war. This must be the case so long as the Territorial Army is not trained to second line duties in time of peace. But it means that the Regular Army, that is, the expeditionary force, is tied down to home garrison duties for six months. In short, when the crisis is upon us we have no power of offensive action overseas for an indefinite period. Are we to understand that the principles of Imperial defence to which the Government has finally committed us are—war first, military training after, and no power of immediate offensive action overseas? It is said that before an expeditionary force can leave this country command of the sea must be obtained, and that that will take the required six months. Yes, but how did that apply to South Africa? Does it apply to India? At any time you may be called upon suddenly and swiftly to double the white garrison of India. At the present moment you could not do any such thing for an indefinite period.

My view of the result of the reorganisation of the forces of His Majesty's Government is best expressed in a sentence used by Mr. Windham in Parliament in 1803 of Mr. Addington, the then Prime Minister. Early in 1800 there were 380,000 Volunteers in Great Britain and 70,000 in Ireland. Mr. Windham, a subsequent Secretary of State for War, summed up the value of that force created by Mr. Addington, by saying that—

> "not only had the right hon. Gentleman not provided an Army, but he had made it impossible that an Army should be provided."

On Mr. Windham's accession to office in 1806 as Secretary of State for War he said, previous to the disbandment of this Force—

> "It is a fact that during the three years and a half that this system has existed, it has cost the Government no less than five millions sterling in allowances to the Volunteers. The expenses that the Volunteers themselves have gone to, and the various subscriptions and contributions that have been made in aid of the system, amount to at least as much more. I am stating below the mark when I say that the security which the country has derived from the Volunteers for the last three years and a half has been purchased at the enormous expense of above ten millions sterling, besides depriving our more efficient descriptions of force of many men who would otherwise have entered into them."

Peace came in 1814, followed by the return from Elba in March, 1815, the reign of 100 days, and the battle of Waterloo, fought by an Army with a strong Militia element, because it had been thought perfectly safe, war in Europe being impossible, to send a great part of the Regular Army to America. But the period of 100 days is suggestive. The whole foundation for the new scheme of Imperial defence is that six months—that is, 180 days—must be allowed to elapse before the Territorial Army is fit for garrison duty at home, and consequently before the Regular Army can be set free for service abroad. The Territorial Army of to-day will never compete with the Regular Army for men, but it will itself suffer competition from the rifle clubs and the proposed Reserve for Volunteers. Under voluntary enlistment the tendency is always to gravitate towards the least disciplined force. The Territorial Army has bled and will bleed the Regular Army for money, and has in that sense already bled the Militia out of existence. Every extra grant which County Associations obtain for the Territorial Army will be paid for by the Regular Army. Many of those belonging to the County Associations, especially the Associations of smaller counties, no doubt see that as far as private contributions are concerned the moment has come when the hat must be sent round. I am myself of opinion that nothing could be more unsound in principle than supporting our second line Army by private contributions, and the Government, by accepting that unsound principle, has abandoned one of its most essential duties.

It will take a year before we really touch bottom in the matter of the destruction of our military system and forces. In twelve months the one year go-as-you-please men of the Territorial Force will leave, and the inadequate supply of Territorial recruits, inadequate to bring it up to establishment, and inadequate to meet the ordinary and extraordinary wastage from the Force, will become apparent. At the end of the year or a little more the Militiamen bribed by the bounty into the Special Reserve will have left to join the Regular Army or on becoming time-expired. It will be clear that the 75,000 men of the Special Reserve have no existence. At the end of a year the effect of abolishing the Militia, the great feeder of the Line, and the chief recruiting agency for the Army, will make itself felt in a lamentable shortage of regular recruits. Then when these three facts burst upon an astonished and alarmed country the military authorities who have urged His Majesty's Government to pursue their present military policy will triumphantly proclaim that the voluntary system has broken down. And so it will have done, but it is His Majesty's Government who have destroyed it, and on them must ever rest that responsibility. I submit that if His Majesty's Government blow up the bridge of voluntary enlistment over which men were wont to pass into the military forces of the Crown, they will not be justified in running about the country wringing their hands and declaring that the bridge of voluntary enlistment has broken down. It is they themselves who have blown it up, and they are perfectly incapable of reconstructing it.

In the near future we must be faced by the breakdown of our military forces, the inevitable result of the policy pursued by His Majesty's Government. The soldiers will then raise the cry for compulsory military service. I am myself convinced that compulsory military service is impossible. I cannot conceive that any political party can appeal to the country with compulsory military service as part of its programme and be returned to power. It seems to me that there can be but one solution—a return to the three line organisation, an organisation which, however imperfect, has never failed to pull us through our difficulties. The County Associations could continue to administer our third line, but under third line conditions of service which alone are possible and acceptable to the men hitherto known as Volunteers.

I do not see much difficulty as regards the County Associations and the third line. The task of reconstructing the second line, the foundation of the Regular Army, matters of much greater importance, will not be so easy. Meantime we have lost all power of offensive action overseas. The great expeditionary force about which we have heard so much is relegated to the position of acting as the garrison of the United Kingdom from which the Government dare not move it, because they have no force ready or likely to be ready to relieve it of home garrison duties. His Majesty's Government commenced their tenure of office by delivering an ultimatum to a land Power. But that was before the Regular Army had been reduced, the Militia abolished, and the Volunteers shattered. I quite understand that His Majesty's Government, having successfully delivered one ultimatum, are perfectly satisfied to rest content, reduce all their forces, and deliver no more. But, unfortunately, if you are impotent to deliver an ultimatum you are a hundred times more likely to receive one, and that is the perilous position in which we are placed for some years to come. It is the price which we have paid for our Territorial Army.

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LORD RAGLAN: My Lords, my noble friend the Duke of Bedford has gone most exhaustively into all the results of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, and I venture to think any impartial person will admit that the noble Duke has shown that everything which when the matter was discussed last year he and those who think with him prophesied would happen is rapidly coming about. The appalling state to which the land forces of this country are being reduced and the still more appalling state to which they will shortly fall, is a matter which, I venture to think, except to those very few persons who are still believers in the scheme of His Majesty's Government, must be patent and easily seen. Never in the history of this country have its defences been in a more lamentable and dangerous condition. As to the Navy, I have no knowledge of naval matters. All I know is that we have always been told that all is for the best in the best of all possible Navies. Yet within the last very few years we have seen the most far-reaching reorganisations and the most far-reaching changes made in the whole of our naval policy. All I can say is that if what existed a few years ago was right then, that which exists now cannot be right, and *vice versa.*

There are one or two points with regard to the Regular Army to which the noble Duke did not allude, and to which I will venture presently to call your Lordships' attention. We all know that an immense and most dangerous reduction has been made in the Regular Forces by His Majesty's Government, but it is amazing that quite recently the War Office have closed almost the whole of Section D. of the Army Reserve. I should like to ask the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War why Section D. of the Army Reserve has been closed. It is most remarkable that the War Office seem determined, whenever it is in any way possible, to reduce the number of His Majesty's soldiers. If they can issue an order, such as that closing Section D., which will affect very large numbers of men, that order is issued; if they can, by any twisting of regulations, issue an order which will discharge men, that is done; and the result is that the Regular Army, as regards both officers and men, is in a state of commotion and turmoil, and in a great number of cases in a thoroughly dissatisfied condition.

The noble Duke has called attention to the reduction of the permanent staff of the old Militia and its inevitable effect on the recruiting for the Regular Army. That reduction has fallen with the greatest possible severity upon the non-commissioned officers of the two arms of the service which I myself happen to know something about—namely, the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers. It was almost impossible for a sergeant in those forces to complete sufficient service with the rank of sergeant to entitle him to his full pension, and it was only by going to the permanent staff of the Auxiliary Forces that those men were able to extend their service, and thereby earn a full sergeant's pension. I venture to think that the falling off in recruiting is largely the result of the fact that a very large number of non-commissioned officers on the permanent staff have, at very short notice, been dismissed into civil life. These men have always been more closely in touch with the civil population than any other description of His Majesty's soldiers, and the way in which they have been treated has gone abroad throughout the length and breadth of the land, and has had the most deleterious effect upon recruiting for the Regular Army as well as for the Special Reserve.

I was one of those who endeavoured to impress upon His Majesty's Government that the proposed conditions of recruiting for the Special Reserve were such that an immense falling off was bound to accrue. In the Royal Monmouthshire Engineers, which regiment I know best, we have during the last seven years enlisted, on an average, somewhere between 350 and 400 recruits during the year. They were all men earning good wages and of a similar stamp to the miners, iron workers, and so forth, who enlisted in similar regiments in South Wales and neighbourhood. Those men were perfectly able to do the ordinary sixty-three drills as a recruit, and to give from four to eight weeks to training in the year, but you will not get them to come out for six months. It is quite possible to get agricultural labourers but not industrial labourers, of which the bulk of the recruits of the old Militia in South Wales and other districts were composed.

There had been for a very considerable time—I think I have alluded to the fact before—a strong and a violent hatred of the Militia on the part of a certain section of soldiers of the Regular Army. Why that should have been, I know not. It can hardly have been from jealousy; but there was a strong feeling against the Militia, which is most remarkable, and the result of which we have seen in this new system. I am firmly convinced that, in destroying the Militia, His Majesty's Government have killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. I should like to emphasise, before passing away from the Special Reserve, what fell from the noble Duke with regard to the number of the Special Reserve, especially the Army Service Corps. We were told last year, if I recollect aright, that the future number of the Special Reserve would be about the same as the old Militia—about 85,000 or 90,000 men. As far as I make out now, the future establishment of the Special Reserve will not be more than about 50,000 or 60,000. Perhaps the noble Lord can enlighten us upon that point. The new conditions in the Yeomanry are practically the same as the old, and we may say that the Yeomanry have transferred *en bloc* to the Territorial Army. The artillery is a new toy, and the recruiting has gone fairly well on that account. But the infantry, as has been so clearly shown to the House by my noble friend, is, after all, the most important part of an Army. Cavalry are all very well; artillery are useful in their place; but after all, the solid nucleus of an Army, the thing upon which its whole fighting capacity must rest, is its infantry; and it is in the infantry where the failure is the most patent.

Now, my Lords, I come to the question of the training of the Territorial Army. The noble Duke has alluded to that, and I do not wish to labour the point; but we have arrived at this, that all the flourish of trumpets about the amount of training which was going to be given to the Territorial Army is boiled down to this, that they are going to receive considerably less training than the old Volunteers. The Volunteer did sixty drills as a recruit and twelve annually as a trained soldier; the Territorial will do forty and ten respectively. I think the noble Lord will find that I am correct.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): That is only the Engineers.

LORD RAGLAN: I think the noble Lord is incorrect there. However, I pass from that. I venture to think that in this question of training the War Office were misled by the Volunteer commanding officers, as every War Office Committee which has discussed this subject has been misled. Every commanding officer of Volunteers knew, at the bottom of his heart, that the training was absurd, ridiculous, and most inefficient; and, therefore, in consultation with the War Office he always pressed for more training for his men. In conversation any commanding officer would say he could do this and that, and his men were prepared to do the other. But, when it came to the actual point, he found that his men could not and would not do it. That is an absolute fact of which I can give half-a-dozen instances from my own personal knowledge; and this has misled the War Office and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. Personally, I would far rather have to deal with men who had never had any training in their lives than with men who had learned the work of a soldier under a wrong system. The net result of the changes introduced by His Majesty's Government is that we have practically lost 200,000 of the armed forces of the Crown and have nothing whatever to put in their place. When war breaks out we shall be unable to use the Fleet or to send out the Expeditionary Army until the Territorial Army is sufficiently trained to take its place, and that will be a very long time.

I have only one more word to say. It appears to be rather the fashion now that if anybody says a word against the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, he is accused of want of patriotism, and it is said that any failure that may result from this scheme will be largely attributable to its critics. I venture to think that if any scheme is essentially sound it ought to be able to stand on its own merits, and ought not to depend upon the casual voice of any humble Member of your Lordships' House such as myself. But I do not believe for one moment that it is possible that anything that can be said, either inside this House or outside of it, can alter the essentially wrong idea upon which the whole of this scheme is founded. We have seen how little success it has had during the time it has been in operation. It has had every possible advantage. The enthusiastic Gentleman, the Secretary of State for War, I believe to be a thorough believer in his own scheme. It has had the entire support of the Press of the country; and I venture to think His Majesty's Government have also had the entire and whole-hearted support of their political opponents in your Lordship's House as well as in the country. It is a pity, I think, in many ways, that it has not received more support from their own political supporters. But I venture to think that when one believes, as I honestly and thoroughly do believe, that this scheme is not only based on wrong ideas but is exceedingly dangerous to the country, it is his duty to speak. In my opinion the breakdown is complete, and the sooner the country understands that the better. I believe, with the noble Duke, that when the country wakes up to what has been done, His Majesty's Government will regret that they did not pay more attention to those who know something as to how military forces should be raised and trained.

*Lord HARRIS: My Lords, I should like to offer to the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War one crumb of comfort to help to remove the gloom which I have seen gradually spread over his countenance during the speeches of the two noble and gallant Lords on this side. I am rather hopeful that the Yeomanry will still exist, not because the Government have given it any encouragement, for they have done everything they could to discourage it, but because it is accustomed to knocks. For by far the greatest part of its existence it had no friends in Parliament, except the officers who belonged to it. There was no one to say a word for the Yeomanry. Even Secretaries of State and under Under-Secretaries could afford very little encomium for it. The cost was small, and therefore they managed to keep it afloat without any very serious efforts at defending it. It was not until after the war, when it was found to be a really useful body, that politicians were encouraged to defend it; and now it is as rare to find anyone attacking it as before it was to find anyone defending it.

If the men have transferred, it is not because of any advantage they receive under the scheme. They have lost their title of Imperial Yeomanry, their pay has been reduced, and their *status* as the mounted branch of Militia has been taken away. But the Yeomanry has been so accustomed all its life to knocks that I think it is even going to stand these knocks. My noble friend behind me said just now that the new conditions in the Yeomanry were practically the same as the old, and that they had transferred *en bloc* because they were not affected. That is hardly correct. The conditions affecting the present Yeomanry are in several particulars different; and it remains to be seen whether in a year's time the class from which the force has hitherto recruited will recruit as readily as heretofore. Personally, I am really in hopes that, notwithstanding these changes, the Yeomanry will go on. As I said before, it is accustomed to these knocks.

Regarding the scheme as a whole, it has always been a matter of profound astonishment to me, what induced the right hon. Gentleman to take it up. I never could understand what he thought he was going to get from it. It is obvious that he is not going to get more drill out of the men than he got before. I cannot help thinking that his idea—I have absolutely no authority for suggesting this, it is merely something that has occurred to me—was that the counties, through the County Associations, would come forward, as they did before the war, with large sums of money, to support the Territorial Army, and as a result large sums would be saved to the Regular Army. It must have been a great disappointment to the right hon. Gentleman when the first thing the county organisations did was to pass a self-denying ordinance declining to do that. I fear that the right hon. Gentleman, basing his scheme, I suppose, somewhat upon the Swiss system, conceived that he would be able, with financial assistance from the counties, to create a Territorial Army very much on the lines of the old Auxiliary Army with the financial help of private individuals. Not having had very great experience of the Auxiliary Forces, the Secretary of State overlooked this fact, that the Auxiliary Forces did obtain a very large measure of assistance from their friends and neighbours; their friends and neighbours have already contributed very large sums towards the maintenance of the companies and troops of the Auxiliary Army, and it is highly improbable that they are going to put their hands any deeper into their pockets than they did before. And, therefore, from that source it is unlikely that the right hon. Gentleman is going to get any greater assistance than the Auxiliary Forces got before. I sincerely hope that my forebodings will not be fulfilled. The subject is far too serious for anything but the most careful consideration. I am happy to offer the Under-Secretary one small crumb of comfort by expressing the belief that the force which has been treated worst will show the best results.

LORD WILLOUHGBY DE BROKE: My Lords, the utterly illusory character of the Territorial Force has been well illustrated in the speeches which have been delivered. I do not propose to add anything to that very telling indictment; but if the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War will give me his attention for one moment I would like to ask one question about the equipment of the Yeomanry, a force which I venture to anticipate he will find a very useful addition to the Territorial Army should it ever take actual effect. I understand that the Yeomanry are to act as the cavalry of the new Territorial Force, and that, I think, will give very great satisfaction. May I ask the noble Lord whether it is the intention of the Army Council to give the Yeomanry another arm in addition to the rifle they now carry? Are they to have the new rifle, as now served out to the cavalry, and are they to have a sword also? I am told that the Yeomanry are to be utilised, with the rest of the Territorial Army when it comes into being, for purposes of Home defence. In that event it would be highly desirable that they should have an additional arm to defend themselves with at close quarters. It is impossible to prevent sudden surprises in any cavalry action in an enclosed country. I speak with very great diffidence about military matters in the presence of so many who know such a great deal more about them than I do; but the small experience I have had in the Yeomanry has shown me that it is almost impossible to avoid getting to close quarters. Therefore, in the event of invasion it is essential that the Yeomanry should be armed with a sword in addition to the rifle.

*LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I should like to say one or two words with regard to the Territorial Force. I cannot accept all the facts as stated in conjunction with the gloomy prophesies to which we have listened. In the first place, I do not think that the Territorial Force is in quite such bad circumstances as have been put forward. Many people seem to think—and some noble Lords seem to think—that the Territorial Force was started on the 1st January. No doubt nominally it was started on that date, but the War Office were not ready, and as a matter of fact, very little could be done till the latter days of March. The force has therefore not had the six months it ought to have had to embody its members and complete its establishment. I am happy to say, however, looking at it from a practical point of view, that I am very well satisfied with what we have done since March in the county with which I am connected. We have done extremely well up to the present. There were several matters which made it very difficult to proceed. In the first place, there was a great deal not ready. The Financial Memorandum was not sent down to the Associations until 20th March. Nobody knew what money we should have to spend, and we could not do much in any way. The commanding officers were also very anxious to know the terms on which their men were to serve. We had, indeed, a great many difficulties thrown in our way. We had no guns for our Artillery until quite late in April; and I think that what has since been accomplished in my county is very creditable both to the commanding officers and to the men. The Yeomanry regiment with which I am associated is entirely up to strength, and has been in camp, where the men acquitted themselves well. We sent one battalion of Artillery into camp with three new guns, yet Colonel Hammond gave them an excellent report, in which he stated that their firing, considering the weather, was very creditable to them and could not have been improved upon even by Regular Artillery, which I think is a pretty good report in all the circumstances. We took our own horses into camp, and so satisfied are those who lend them that we shall have no difficalty whatever in getting the horses for these operations next year. We have had considerable difficulties to contend with owing to the breaking up of one of the battalions and the disruption, if I may use the word, of some seven or eight companies; yet notwithstanding that we have done well. Therefore I hope that those who have joined the Territorial Force will not in any way be discouraged by the gloomy forebodings to which expression had been given.

*LORD LUCAS: My Lords, I think a small amount of actual fact is worth a great deal of theory. The noble Duke's speech consisted entirely of conjecture as to what was going to take place, and of predictions and prophecies of various forms of failure which were bound to befall the new Army scheme. These were based upon the very insufficient data which we have before us at present with regard to recruiting and other matters.

I must say I did not follow the line of argument which the noble Duke took up. I understand his argument to be that the Regular Army will be in considerable danger of losing that flow of recruits which it has hitherto derived from the Militia; and I understood him to say immediately afterwards that the old Militia class of man was not going into the Special Reserve, and that the class of men going into the Special Reserve used it as a stepping-stone into the Regular Army. The noble Duke cannot have it both ways. Either the Special Reserve is going to form an efficient Militia, or else to be a funnel for recruits for the Regular Army. If it is going to starve the Regular Army of recruits it will be an efficient Militia, for it will keep its recruits. If it is going to supply the Regular Army we need have no fear as to any failure in the supply of troops required for the Regular Army. The noble Duke tells us that the Special Reserve is going to be altogether inferior to the old Militia. He bases his view on the fear that by no means all the old Militia are joining the force, and he predicts that when the present Militia have passed away others will not take their place, on what ground we do not quite know.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: The falling off is shown in the recruiting returns.

*LORD LUCAS: The noble Duke will probably agree with me that during a period of transition such as we are going through at the present moment you can hardly build up a safe prediction as to what is going to take place in the future upon the basis of what is happening now while the scheme is new and the men are in a state of considerable uncertainty. How great is that uncertainty is seen in the varying effects the scheme has had upon different battalions. The noble Duke is to be condoled with on the ill-success of his efforts to induce his young men to transfer into the Special Reserve; but your Lordships have heard also of the individual success which has befallen a neighbouring battalion commanded by the noble Marquess on the front Opposition bench.

LORD RAGLAN: I do not wish to interrupt the noble Lord, but surely they are quite different cases.

*LORD LUCAS: The noble Marquess has transferred something like 70 per cent of his men, whereas the noble Duke, I believe, has only succeeded in transferring 40 per cent. We have not yet had the Returns in from the various units of the Special Reserve, and where you have such startling differences as that, it is, of course, absolutely impossible to predict in any way what the results are going to be. The reports, as far as they have come in, show that the class of men we are now taking as recruits are, on the whole, superior to the class of men who have hitherto enlisted in the Militia, and, if one can believe that, it is presumable —I am not going to commit myself any further than that—that, with a better class of men coming in, you will, at any rate, maintain as a special reserve force, the average number who went into the old Militia and remained there.

The noble Duke raised a very important point as to the question of recruiting. That is a point which we are watching very carefully. It is too early yet to say what the result is going to be, but if we find that the present Permanent Staff cannot provide us with a sufficient number of recruits, we are prepared with other methods of augmenting their efforts. The character of the debate is really summed up in a single sentence by the noble Lord (Lord Harris) when he said that he could not conceive what induced the taking up of this scheme. That has been the attitude of almost all the speakers who have hitherto spoken upon it. I can tell the noble Lord in one sentence what induced the taking up of this scheme. The reason for the reorganisation of the Army was that the Army could not fulfil its commitments at the time the Government came into office, and, therefore, some reorganisation was necessary. It was impossible for the Government to put into the field any force approaching 100,000 men, and maintain it there during hostilities. It was also impossible to do what every military authority has insisted ought to be done—to keep that force up to its strength in the field, with a proper supply of properly trained drafts, and have in this country any sort of organised force for the defence of these shores after the Regular Army had left. Those, very shortly, were the reasons for which this reorganisation was undertaken. And when the reorganisation took place, all branches of the service and the various lines on which the Army was based had to be considered, not solely from the point of view of what was best for their individual interests, but also from the point of view of what was best in the interests of the whole military system of the country.

I deplore that the Militia was in that intermediate position between the first line and the third line which could not be maintained, and that it has, therefore, as far as its individual interests are concerned, to undergo, perhaps, more inconvenience than other branches of the Service. But the first thing of all that the Government had to consider was the efficiency of the Regular Army in the field, and they also had to face the fact that, having placed the Regular Army in the field, it was their duty to maintain it when it was there. That is a point upon which we are all agreed. From the whole tenour of the speeches delivered by the noble Duke and the noble Lord who followed him, it is obvious that the Militia were the class who could be looked to and depended upon to come out for that purpose in the event of hostilities.

The noble Duke has based his case almost entirely upon the question of numbers, which is the sole criterion he has taken in estimating the efficiency of the Army. But there are a great number of other considerations. There is the use to which you are going to apply them, when you have got them, and I say without hesitation that, from the point of view of the whole of our military system, one Special Reservist who is prepared to go out as a draft to fill the depleted ranks of the Regular Army is worth one and a half or two Militiamen who could not be called upon to fulfil that function. Therefore, though your Special Reserve may not reach in numbers what the Militia was before, the value of your Special Reserve is proportionately much greater, man for man, than the Militia was before. Similarly in the case of the officers. The officer of the Special Reserve will in future be available for filling those gaps which we know will exist in the Regular Army on mobilisation, and in that way every officer we get in the Special Reserve is an officer to the good from the point of view of the general military situation. In other ways the whole of this scheme has from the beginning been aimed at making the first line and the second line of the Army a more co-ordinated machine than it was before. We have devoted ourselves to filling up the gaps that existed in it before. After all, as I say, numbers are by no means the only consideration in the efficiency of an Army. A large Army with a bad staff has often, as your Lordships know, been beaten by a very small but more efficient Army. We have devoted ourselves to that. We have done what we can to increase the numbers of officers and improve their training. All these things have to be taken into account when you are considering the relative efficiency of the Army before and since the reorganisation was begun.

With regard to what Lord Raglan said as to the hardships that are incurred by the Permanent Staff, nobody realises that more fully than we do, and nobody deplores more than we do that those hardships have to be incurred; they are consequent upon any scheme of reorganisation, and it is very much to be regretted that that is so. We are doing all we can to save individuals from incurring hardships. The noble Lord mentioned the new conditions of service for the Special Reserve. The six months training, and the shorter period afterwards, is, to a certain extent, in the nature of an experiment. It is perfectly open to modifications, but, as the noble Lord, I think, himself admitted, there are certain classes of people whom it undoubtedly does suit to come out for six months recruit training. They are the men who cannot give up a very long and indefinite period, but who yet have six months at their disposal at a certain period of their lives; and that suits them. The object of the Army Council in laying down these conditions is to secure the greatest efficiency possible, but, if it is found that there are large classes of men who are precluded from joining the Special Reserve by reason of those conditions, I have no doubt modifications will be made in them to suit the circumstances of these men as long as it does not impair general military efficiency.

I now pass to the question of the Territorial Army. I am not going to follow the noble Duke in the figures into which he entered, and which were pure conjecture. We have no reason to be in any way despondent as to the figures of the Territorial Army at the present time. I think that from every point of view they are perfectly satisfactory. We did not expect there would be a great rush, and that we should at once fill the establishments. It is much better that we should not do that; it is better that we should go slowly and pick our recruits, as is being done. There are a large number of units in this country which could be up to and over their establishments at the present moment. A large number of units are only about two-thirds of their establishment because, for the first time, care is being exercised to secure a really efficient class of men. The reports we have in all tend to show that the Territorial Army, from a physical point of view, is far more efficient than the Volunteer Force was before. This transformation has acted as a purge upon the force. Speaking broadly, we have been able to keep the most efficient men, while the men who are not efficient and who did not intend to make themselves more efficient than they could possibly help, have been got rid of. The class of men who are coming in are of a most excellent standard and quality. Only to-day in the War Office, I saw an official report from one of the divisions which said that, although smaller in numbers, the Territorial force is a far finer force in physique and general efficiency than the force which it has superseded. The medically unfit to whom reference has been made, are the men to a great extent who have been weeded out by this process of transformation, and the men now coming in are being subjected to a far more rigorous medical examination than ever before. In other ways, there is an enormous improvement in the Territorial Force.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: Perhaps the noble Lord will inform me if I am right in thinking there was no medical examination in the case of transfers?

*LORD LUCAS: The men transferred were not medically examined, but at the same time the great majority of the men who when they were examined some years ago were found physically unfit have been weeded out of this force by the transformation which has taken place. I should have thought that we had by this time laid down very clearly what the functions of the Teritorial Force are, and that to fulfil those functions we are going to do our best to give them a satisfactory training. I differ entirely from the view, which has been expressed more than once, that if the Territorial Force is, as a whole, unable to fulfil the whole fortnight's training provided in the Act, it is, therefore, going to be unable to fulfil its function as a second line force. Whether you give a force a week's training or a fortnight's training, you have only to read the opinions that were expressed by a number of prominent soldiers before the Norfolk Commission to see that neither of those two periods will fit a force of this nature to take the field at the outbreak of hostilities. We have all along said that this force must have a certain amount of training on embodiment before it can take the field against trained foreign troops, and it is a misconception of what a second line force really is if you say that because it is not prepared on the outbreak of war to take the field at once, it is, therefore, a failure. No second line force could.

I will not follow the noble Duke into his views as to the possible embodiment or not of the Territorial Force. There we are getting into the region of even more remote speculation than we had been in up to that point; but after all, the Act provides for the embodiment of the Territorial Force and the immediate commencement of its training as soon as the whole of the Reserves are called out. My recollection of what took place during those various times which the noble Duke mentioned is not sufficiently accurate to enable me to say whether it was the case that the whole of the Reserves were called out in 1885, and on the other occasions. But the embodiment is absolutely automatic. As the Reserves comes out the Territorial Force has to be embodied. It does not require an Act or an Order in Council or anything of that sort, and I do not think that the point is worth arguing whether or not the Government will avail itself of the power in the case of a great emergency.

Finally, the noble Duke suggests a return to the three line system. I should like to know how the noble Duke proposes, first of all, to supply the Regular Army when in the field with drafts of properly trained men. I know that he will not agree—I, at least, imagine he will not agree—to start the Militia Reserve again. I should like to know how we are going to provide that Reserve which is absolutely essential when we have used up the Regular Reserve. In the second place, what are the functions of a force which the battalions under the present scheme will not be able to carry out? And, in the third place, where does the great difference come in between the position of this country with the Regular Army gone from it, a certain number of battalions on lines of communication, and the remainder of the Militia and the Volunteers left in this country—where does the great difference come in between that and the position when you have got the Territorial Army automatically embodied? If you return to the old system you return to a system which does not give you an organised force; whereas this force does really represent the best efforts of the country to form a second line Army. The noble Duke has not in his speech in any way met those considerations. To say that the system has broken down is, I think, premature, and to advocate a return to the three line system without explaining how he proposes that those functions should be discharged certainly does not carry conviction.

My Lords, I must apologise for having detained you so long. I hope your Lordships in considering this question, will realise that the Army is going through a transition stage, and that it is too early at the present moment to judge of the success or the failure of the Territorial Force. It is an enormous ploblem. I am sure that noble Lords who are Presidents or members of their County Associations, will agree with me when I say that they have not yet begun to touch the fringe of the recruiting problem in most of the counties, and cannot tell whether or not they will get all the men required until a couple of years have elapsed. When this scheme has been working for some time, and when it is seen how far the country responds to the appeal which has been made to it, then will be the time, and not until then to say whether the scheme of the Territorial Army is a success or not.

*VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I am sure the last words of the noble Lord will have evoked a sympathy on the part of your Lordships and a desire to suspend judgment upon every point upon which judgment can be suspended. But I must say, after the powerful indictment of the noble Duke, that the speech of the noble Lord was not altogether a reassuring one. The noble Duke drew a very clear picture, and certainly the figures which the Under-Secretary was able to give to the House were few indeed. I entirely agree that many of those figures are incomplete, but I do not agree with the noble Lord when he said that we had not yet touched the fringe of the recruiting problem. I know that in some counties every effort has been made by meetings of all kinds to induce recruits to come in; and I regret to say that in some cases the recruiting for the Territorial Army has shown a very marked falling off.

I have no desire to say a word, if I can help it, which will in any way increase the difficulties of His Majesty's Government. Whether we like the scheme or not, it is the only scheme upon which we can depend at this moment for the defence of the country. But I deprecate as strongly as I can the tone of confidence in which the noble Lord speaks in all these matters, and some of the statements he has made this evening, which I do not believe can be for a moment substantiated. I put away the inducements which he has held out to me to challenge his statement that the organisation which has been set on foot with a much smaller number of men will discharge the functions which the late organisation with a much larger number of men could not discharge. But when the noble Lord claims that the men we have enlisted into the Territorial Army are of a different and more reliable class altogether than the old Volunteers and Yeomanry, I reply that the noble Lord has not seen as many of them as I have. I saw 4,000 of them the other day, and noticed with regret the lack of physique, age, and stamina amongst them. It was a matter of general remark; and, so far from the noble Lord being justified in saying that the change has caused the transfer of all the best men, I believe that, on the contrary, the additional demands made upon them have caused many of the best men to feel that they were not able to transfer. The noble Lord shakes his head. But I am afraid he must give us a little more in the way of chapter and verse before he can induce us to believe that a far finer force now exists than that which has been practically disbanded.

I would call the noble Lord's attention to two points in particular. In the first place, I think that the large number of the one-year Territorials enlisted and the enormous amount of recruiting which may be rendered necessary as a consequence must give us cause for serious anxiety. We have not up to this moment had any pledge from the Government—any reliable pledge—as regards their intentions in the future. One point was not mentioned, and that is the state of recruiting for the Regular Army. It is not merely the recruiting for the Territorial Army and the Special Reserve which has fallen off; the recruiting for the Regular Army has been at a lower ebb than for many years. Your Lordships will, perhaps, allow me to give you a few figures. Recruiting for the Regular Army has fallen off from 39,000 in 1898 and 40,000 in 1899 to 35,000, 36,000, and 34,000 respectively in the last three years. That number of men is not sufficient to keep the Regular Army even at the reduced strength at which it has been placed by the present Secretary of State for War.

LORD LUCAS: I am sorry to interrupt the noble Lord, but, if he looks at paragraph 2 of the Report, he will see why the numbers are smaller in those years.

*VISCOUNT MIDLETON. I cannot follow out Paragarph 2 at this moment. But, whatever the cause may be, the reduction in recruiting is certainly a fact. Now, I want to ask for a definite pronouncement on the part of the Government. I do not wish to build upon what seem to me the anxious statistics of the last few months at all more than they ought to be built upon. On the contrary, I hope that the next few months may see a large increase of recruiting for the Territorial Army and of the number of transfers from the Militia to the Special Reserve. But, pending that result, I want to ask His Majesty's Government whether they will categorically promise us that no further reductions of the Regular Army will take place. A question on this subject was put in another place somewhat in these terms—

> "Whether it is intended to effect any further reduction in the Infantry of the Line; and, if so, whether it is proposed to effect this reduction by destroying additional units, or by reducing the strength or establishment of existing units."

The answer was in the negative. But since that answer was given ominous language has been used by Members of the Government, and we have had statements in the public Press by which the public mind has been gravely disturbed upon these matters.

Last year we addressed a serious warning from this Bench to the Government, with regard to the effect on the Militia of what was proposed; and there were also serious warnings from men of experience in Territorial work as to the effect of the Secretary of State's proposals. We then urged upon the Government with all the force we could that they should see their foundation formed before they built upon it by destroying those units of the Regular Army which they thought would be unnecessary when they had this Special Reserve, from which they expect so much and from which they have received comparatively so little. I think the condition of our forces at this moment is one of supreme national danger. You have largely reduced the Regular Army; and you have considerably reduced for the moment the second line. Is it too much to ask that until those confident expectations which the Under-Secretary has voiced this afternoon has been made effective, His Majesty's Government should refrain from further reducing the Regular troops? My Lords, I put that question to the Government. I see the President of the Board of Agriculture in his place, and I hope he will be able to answer it. But if he is unable to give us a categorical answer in that respect, I will put the question on Monday to the noble Lord the Leader of the House. I hope I have not said a word which is likely in any way to reflect upon recruiting, or to have any effect, except to urge upon His Majesty's Government at this moment, when everything is, as it were, in the melting-pot and when the new organisation in Brigades and Divisions has not even been brought into work, not to sacrifice what they have got in the expectation of something which may never be realised. I ask the noble Earl to go as far as he can in giving me an answer, because the expectation of further reductions is operating as a pall over the whole military system and is paralysing the efforts of those who are most anxious to assist the Government in this matter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, I feel that a very important question has been raised this afternoon, but I am not quite certain that the case is so bad as has been made out. I have had some experience of a Militia regiment—my father commanded one for forty years, and I had the honour to command one for five years. It was a very good regiment; and, during the whole time I was in command, we never had one single court-martial. They were a very good class of men; and, if there is an improvement on them now, we certainly may congratulate ourselves upon the class of men we have been fortunate enough to secure. As regards the Yeomanry, we had a re-assuring statement from Lord Harris. He is one of the best Yeomanry officers we have, and, according to his statement this afternoon, that branch of the Service does not seem to have suffered or to have been terrorised in any way. Then, as regards the Territorials, I think the House must, in fairness, remember that they have only been three months in existence. We have been told that already 60 per cent. of the total number required have been secured, and that during a period of transition. The noble Lord opposite called attention to the physique of the Territorials he had lately seen. Well, I saw them too, and I cannot say that they were not what we should wish to see in the great Territorial Force of this country I think, in fairness, he will agree with me that there were some that were a very good class of men indeed. I saw the Territorials in the South of England at Bristol during the same week; and their appearance was so good as to call forth a well-deserved compliment from His Majesty himself, who was pleased to express his satisfaction. We have been told that there is a great danger in these men being bound for only one year. Well, as an outsider, I think one must suppose that if a man gets a chance of joining for one year or for a number of years, it is probable that he would join for the shortest period just to see how he got on, and how he liked it. I do not think it can be said that because he joined for only one year it therefore followed that he would be unwilling to continue the service for two, three, or four years, or longer. The noble Lord opposite has asked for a definite pronouncement from the Government that they will make no further reductions in the Regular Army. I do not agree with the noble Lord's view that the country is in a position of supreme danger, but nevertheless, in the name of His Majesty's Government, I desire to thank him and other noble Lords opposite for their promise of assistance in the difficulty we are supposed to find ourselves in at the present moment. The question will be very carefully considered by the Secretary of State for War, but it is absolutely impossible for me to make any definite pronouncement.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I do not rise for the purpose of challenging the statements made by the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture, although I must say I think at some points his testimonial to the excellence of the present military arrangements was not a very conclusive one. I wish to say one word with regard to the request made by my noble friend beside me for a specific assurance with regard to future reductions in the Regular Army. It is quite natural that the President of the Board of Agriculture should feel that a pledge of that kind is one which he may not be in a position to give upon the spur of the moment, but it is a pledge which we desire, if possible, to obtain. We admit the force of that part of the argument of the Under-Secretary of State which rested upon the contention that we were passing through a period of transition, and that during that period it was not unnatural that at some point there should be a certain amount of weakness in our military position. But what we desire to know is whether, while that period of transition is still in progress, it is or is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to carry further those large reductions in the fighting strength of the Regular Army which have already taken place. Those reductions have filled many of us with a feeling of great anxiety, and after what has fallen from the Under-Secretary of State this evening we feel more strongly than ever that no further reductions of the kind should be allowed to take place.

Lord RAGLAN: The noble Lord the Under-Secretary has not answered my question as to why Section D. of the Army Reserve has been closed.

Lord LUCAS: Owing to the three years enlistment, the Reserve at the present moment is so unduly inflated that it has been thought that that section should be closed for the time being. It is only a temporary measure.

EDUCATION CODE—MEDICAL INSPECTION OF CHILDREN.

Lord CLIFFORD of CHUDLEIGH moved to resolve "That, in the opinion of this House, the words "Satisfactory provision must be made for the medical inspection of children attending the school in accordance with Section 13 (1) (*b*) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907,' in Article 25, Subsection (*c*) of the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools in England should be omitted from the Code." He said the words to which he had taken exception and which he moved to delete from the Code did not, on the face of them, convey the exact point to which it was his wish to call the attention of the House. That point was more clearly brought out in the Memorandum which prefaced the Code than in the Code itself. By Section 13 of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, it was provided that the powers and duties of the local education authority under the Education Act, 1902, should include the duty of providing for the medical inspection of children immediately before or at the time of, or as soon as possible after, their admission to a public elementary school, and on such other occasions as the Board of Education should direct. That section came into operation in January last, and in explanation of it the Board had issued a Memorandum, which had been supplemented by a further circular containing specific directions. When the Bill was before their Lordships, Lord Belper, on behalf of the county councils, moved an Amendment to make the adoption of medical inspection a matter more or less of option with the county council. This was refused on the ground that such inspection was one of great importance to the national interests of the country; and the recent Report of the Commission on Physical Deterioration was brought up in support of that contention. Lord Belper had reminded their Lordships, in a speech in the recent debate on local taxation, that county councils had laid before the Board of Education a claim to be assisted out of the national Exchequer on the ground that medical examination was a matter of national importance. The President of the Board of Education had received that representation with a certain amount of sympathy, and had promised that some assistance would be given to work this provision. But they had seen nothing of that assistance. All that they found in the Code was a threat that money which they had already earned was to be taken away from them if they failed to perform this duty of inspection. He was quite willing to admit that to make such a condition was well within the power of the Board of Education; but he held that it was unjust when the services for which grants were given had been well and faithfully fulfilled that the money so earned should be taken away because the local education authority had failed, unaided and unassisted by the Board, to carry out a duty which they felt was one that did not pertain to education in its normal condition and which was really a national duty. The Board of Education had not stopped at threatening the local authority with a heavy fine if they did not carry out this duty. They had, in a somewhat unfortunate way, interpreted the Act as giving them a power to force upon the local education authority the appointment of certain officers. They alluded in several places in the Code to an officer called the school medical officer. The wording used was rather curious, and referred to the "naming" of the medical officer by the Board of Education. A Speaker of the House of Commons who threatened to name a Member was once asked, "If you do name me, what will happen?" The Speaker was said to have replied, "The Lord only knows." Well, he was rather in that position; he failed to make out what the Board of Education meant by "naming" a medical officer. It was the custom for most local authorities to appoint their medical officers and to pay them. He did not know whether naming them was supposed to include payment as well as appointment. In this matter he did not think the local education authorities were being treated with justice. Before any threat to penalise and to fine was indulged in, the Government ought to give some substantial assistance which would aid them in their work; and if, on the failure of their work, that grant was stopped he was sure the local education authorities would not complain. But to impose upon local authorities the duty of the medical inspection of children, without giving them any monetary assistance for that special purpose, and at the same time to threaten them with fines if they failed to carry out that duty, was most unjust.

Moved to resolve "That, in the opinion of this House, the words 'Satisfactory provision must be made for the medical inspection of children attending the school in accordance with Section 13 (1) (*b*) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907,' in Article 25, subsection (*c*) of the Code of Regulations for Public Elementary schools in England, should be omitted from the Code."—(*Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.*)

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY was sorry that this important question had come on at so late an hour. The matters to which the noble Lord had called attention were matters of some importance, but he could not support the Motion he had made. In the first place, he felt that if there was an objection to this medical inspection it should have been made last year when the Act was being passed. That Act contained a number of valuable provisions, and therefore there was a general desire in all parts of the House that it should pass, and a willingness to take the items they did not like in order to secure those which they regarded as of value. The Bill having become law, they could not blame the Board of Education for embodying in the Code the statutory obligation of every local education authority to provide medical inspection. The noble Lord had said that it was hard to put new duties upon the local authorities, and not to give them additional moneys from public funds to meet those new duties; but it should not be forgotten that the grants had been increased year by year. Therefore, he did not think complaint could be made if Parliament imposed extra duties if those duties were reasonable and such as might very fairly be put upon the local authorities. What he complained of was not so much that the Board of Education were giving effect to the will of Parliament by ordering local authorities to carry out medical inspection, but rather that the circular in which the Board had ordered or suggested that medical inspection should be carried out, in many points went far beyond their statutory rights. They had been very anxious to thrust upon the county authority, which was also the education authority, the working of all this through the county medical officer. Many counties had not appointed medical officers, and many did not mean to do so. All that the Board of Education had a right to demand was that there should be medical inspection. The exact measure of that inspection, whether through the county medical officer or through officers appointed specially for the purpose, was, in his opinion, left by the Act in the discretion of the local authority. As to the Code, he had a complaint to make. The Code made more and more obscure the things that had to be done. In former days they had, attached to the Code, an appendix showing article by article any practice which had to be amended. That was a great help. But now a person had to do a piece of collation, adding and comparing one Code with another, and that made it hard for the man in the street and members of county councils to follow the changes in the Code. He agreed with the noble Lord that they ought to watch very jealously the attempt of any Government Department to usurp more than its own legal powers. He felt strongly that the hope for the future of education was to trust very much more to the local authorities, and that the possession by the Board of Education of too much power was not to the advantage of local education.

THE LORD STEWARD (Earl BEAUCHAMP): My Lords, I share the regret expressed by the noble Lord that this subject has been raised at this late hour, and I regret it the more, because the subject is one of real importance. It is one of those few subjects connected with education upon which I think there is real agreement on both sides of the House. The noble Lord seems to me in his Resolution to confuse the principle as to whether there should be medical inspection with the method by which it should be carried out. The duty is laid by Act of Parliament upon the Board of Education of seeing that there is this medical inspection, and therefore, the only matter which really comes before us to-night is the method by which the medical inspection should be carried out. The Resolution of the noble Lord seems to me to be aimed much more at Section 13 of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of last year, than at the present policy of the Board of Education. I think we must take it for granted that this duty does lie upon the Board of Education. The question, therefore, is how they are carrying out the obligation Parliament has laid upon them. In this matter it seems to me, if I may say so, that the Board of Education are dealing with great gentleness with the various local authorities. The words in the appendix are to the effect that the medical inspection will, in future, be one of the elements to be considered in determining the efficiency of each school, in regard to the grant to the school. The noble Lord must remember that the Act came into operation on the first of January this year. Seven months have gone by, and during that period the Board of Education cannot be said to have applied any harsh pressure upon the various local authorities. Indeed, it seems to me that they have treated them with very great consideration, and that the least they could have done was to have inserted in the Code the words to which the noble Lord has called attention. Indeed, from the personal acquaintance I have with current public opinion, so far as it is interested in questions of this kind, I think it is more likely that in future public opinion will urge upon the various local authorities that they should make even more stringent inquiries than those at present suggested by the Board of Education, and for my own part, I hope that public opinion will demand that the local education authorities should take a real, sincere, and thorough interest in this question of medical inspection. As to the expense entailed, the figures which had been published by the County Councils Associations ranged from 4d. per child in Essex and Lancashire to 1s. 4d. in Cheshire and Yorkshire. The difference between those figures makes it very difficult to say that all these estimates can have been framed with accuracy. At the present moment, in the opinion of the Board, the probable cost of medical inspection is too obscure to allow of any reliable estimate being formed. The average of the estimates of the county councils is 10d., and at the outset that may be regarded as not an unlikely amount. But I must remind the noble Lord that this whole question of the estimate depends very largely upon local circumstances. I think he quoted from a footnote to the Code, in which the Board of Education expressly say that in certain circumstances they require varying degrees of medical inspection, and I cannot help thinking that some of the authorities have included in this estimate of medical inspection something more than the duty which lies upon them. They have probably included in their estimate every possible source of expense, upon the supposition that some local authorities will make a full, and, perhaps, even an extravagant use of the powers as well as the duties with which they have been entrusted. For the present, at any rate, I think I may venture to reassure the noble Lord, and to say that the extravagant estimates which are to be found in certain pessimistic quarters are not likely to prove entirely accurate. I am encouraged in saying that by a figure which was given by the noble Marquess, Lord Londonderry, when he was President of the Board in 1905. He said then that the cost of medical inspection would be extremely small, generally involving less than one-tenth of a penny rate. That is borne out by the fact that in one large county borough where medical inspection is now in operation and is, in the general opinion, efficiently carried out, the cost works out at between 6d. and 1s., although some of the authorities stated that it would be something like 2s. 9d. per child. The noble Lord complained that His Majesty's Government, in giving these fresh powers to local authorities, had done nothing to help them to carry them out. I must remind the noble Lord that at the present moment there is an Education Bill before the other House of Parliament by which His Majesty's Government take power to distribute a sum of £1,400,000 amongst the various local authorities. That, of course, is not allocated to any one specific purpose, but is to meet the expense of duties now cast upon them. I shall not detain your Lordships further, though I have here certain figures which, had it been earlier in the evening, I should have ventured to give the House dealing with the way in which various local authorities have already dealt with this matter, and which, I think, would go far to show that it has not been found oppressive or hard by the vast majority of local authorities. Generally speaking, the local authorities show a willingness and desire to co-operate with the Board of Education in carrying out the provisions of the Act of last year. The Board of Education, in their Code and in the Memorandum, have merely done their best to assist the various local authorities to carry out the Act, and in these circumstances I venture to hope the noble Lord will agree to the suggestion which has been made by Lord Stanley of Alderley and withdraw his Motion.

LORD CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH said he was glad to hear that the Board of Education took such a moderate view of the expense. A borough medical inspection, however, could be conducted much more easily, cheaply, and efficiently than in a scattered county, and his fear was that the Board of Education, in making their regulations, might act very harshly. With regard to the assistance that had been promised, he suggested that the financial aid should have been given by the Government at the same time that fresh duties were placed upon the local authorities.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Eight o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 16*th July*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Barry Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [Lords]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Lanark Corporation (Extension of Boundaries, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill.—" To confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Lanark Corporation," presented by Mr. Sinclair; and ordered (under Section 7 of the Act) to be considered upon Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

Tollemache Estate Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time.

Leith Burgh Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Employment of Military in Cases of Disturbance.—Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 236.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill, without Amendment; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to:—Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to enable His Majesty's Postmaster-General to acquire lands in London, Glasgow, Bolton, Devonport, Dover, Ilford, and Stroud for the public service; and for other purposes." [Post Office Sites Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law with respect to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and the Court of Appeal in England." [Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provision with respect to the tenure of office of Masters of Endowed Schools." [Endowed Schools (Masters) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend Section 1 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, with respect to the compulsory acquisition of tenanted land." [Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Falkirk and District Water." [Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the preservation of the underground sources of the River Wandle." [River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords.]

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Ordered (under Section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered upon Monday next.

River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Hawkesbury Upton; and Norwich; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Edinburgh; and Wakefield; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Three Petitions from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Monkton and Prestwick; Muirkirk; and Rothesay; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Rules made by the Board of Trade under the Census of Production Act, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CARE AND CONTROL OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire concerning the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded. Vol. VIII. Report [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE ACT, 1890.

Copy presented, of Correspondence relative to the refusal of the Secretary of State's Certificate under Section 17 (2) of the Act to the River Tyne Police Force for the year ended 29th September, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Blackpool, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877 (OXFORD).

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of Brasenose College, Oxford, on 11th March, 1908, amending Statute III., Part II., 12, of the Statutes of the College [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 233.]

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of All Souls College, Oxford, on 28th February, 1908, and sealed on 3rd March, 1908, amending

Statute 12*a*, Clause 2, of the Statutes of the College [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 234.]

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877 (CAMBRIDGE).

Copy presented, of Statutes made by the University of Cambridge (sealed on 27th March, 1908) amending Chapter VI., Statute B, Sections 12 and 13, Chapter VII., Statute B, Sections 2 and 4, and adding paragraphs 8 and 9 to Chapter VII., Statute B, of the Statutes of the University [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 235.]

WINTER ASSIZES ACTS, 1876 AND 1877.

Copy presented, of Seven Orders in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, relating to the ensuing Winter Assizes [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894, AND MERCHANT SHIPPING (MERCANTILE MARINE FUND) ACT, 1898.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, adding to the exemptions from Light Dues in the Second Schedule to The Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act, 1898 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894, AND WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, empowering certain Officers in British Protectorates to take depositions respecting injuries received by a member of the crew of a British vessel who may be left behind in any of the Protectorates [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FOREIGN JURISDICTION ACT, 1890.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, entitled "The Cyprus Courts of Justice Order, 1908" [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FOREIGN JURISDICTION ACT, 1890, AND CONSULAR SALARIES AND FEES ACT, 1891.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, entitled "The China (Passenger Ships Fees) Order in Council, 1908" [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 4th July, 1908, approving a Memorial of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, praying sanction to the extension of the period of full pay sick leave in certain cases und under certain conditions [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

OSBORNE.

Copy presented, of Report by the House Governor and Medical Superintendent at Osborne for the year ending 31st March, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LABOURERS (IRELAND).

Return [presented 15th July] to be printed. [No. 232.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

European Parcels Post.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that parcels sent by parcel post from this country to Germany and Denmark cost for carriage 2s., whilst similar parcels from Germany and Denmark to this country cost only 1s. 5d.; whether he is aware that from Switzerland, in the centre of Europe, a parcel to Norway costs 1s. 5d., whilst a similar parcel from this country to Norway costs 2s., or nearly 50 per cent. more; whether he is aware that a parcel from Switzerland to this country costs 1s. 10d., and *vice versa* 2s. 6d.; whether the latest agreement with Japan provides for a cost of 4s., where Germany only pays 2s. 7d.; whether he is aware that German postal rates for parcels to seventeen European countries are only half of the average cost from this country; and what steps, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The hon. Member's comparison of charges is misleading. There is in almost every case a triple scale of postage in force in this country for parcels sent abroad under which a light parcel costs less for postage than a heavy one. The comparisons given in the Question are correct so far as they go, but they are applicable only to heavy parcels, while in most cases the rates on light parcels compare very favourably with those on parcels of the same weight sent from the Continent to this country or to other destinations. Thus, to take some of the exchanges instanced, while light parcels, *i.e.*, parcels not over three pounds, from this country to Germany and Denmark cost 1s., similar parcels from Germany and Denmark cost 1s. 5d.; a light parcel from this country to Norway costs 1s., but from Switzerland to Norway by the cheapest route 1s. 5d.; and on a light parcel sent from this country to Switzerland the postage is the same as in the reverse direction, namely, 1s. 6d. On the whole the triple scale of postage is not, I think, disadvantageous to the public in this country. As I have told the hon. Member, in answer to another Question, I have for some time been considering what improvements can be effected.

Pekin Indemnity.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what amount is still owing to this country on account of the Pekin indemnity; and how long is it overdue.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The total indemnity payable by China was fixed at 450,000,000 taels. Of this total the British share is 50,620,545 taels. Under the terms of the Protocol the indemnity is to be paid by annuities extending over the period to 1940. These annuities are being paid punctually and fully, and no part of the sum is overdue.

Volunteer Plain Clothes Drills.

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received Memorials from ex-Volunteers in Gloucester and other towns praying that they may be allowed to do six or eight plain clothes drills a year and complete the course of annual musketry with the Territorial Army, on condition that they hold themselves liable for service with the Territorial Army in cases of emergency; and whether, in view of the reserve that could in this manner be formed for the Territorial Army without in any way taking possible recruits from it, he can see his way to grant the request of the memorialists.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. In view of the fact that the County Associations are at present fully engaged in the formation of the active portion of the Territorial Force it is considered expedient to finish this work before proceeding with the formation of a reserve. In any event it is impossible to take any steps without careful preparation.

Fyfield Farm, Enford, Wilts.

MR. HICKS BEACH: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Fyfield Farm, in the parish of Enford, Wilts, fell vacant last Michaelmas; whether the farm is now let to a tenant who already farms about 4,000 acres of land in the district; whether there were several applications for small holdings from the neighbourhood when the farm fell vacant; and why steps were not taken to sub-divide, at any rate, part of the farm into small holdings.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This farm fell vacant last Michaelmas. It is now let to a tenant who farms a very considerable amount of land from the War Department. There were several applications for small holdings from the neighbourhood when the farm fell vacant. The whole question of making the arable part of the farm, about 62 acres, available for small holdings was fully considered, and it was finally decided that it was impossible to let the land for small holdings without interfering with the training facilities of the troops, and it has been found necessary to take a covenant from the present tenant to lay down the arable land in grass within the next two years.

Woolwich Common.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Secretary of State for War on what date and for what consideration, were the right of common on Woolwich Common acquired by the War Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) What is known as Woolwich Common formerly consisted of two commons, Woolwich and Charlton, which were respectively acquired under two Acts of 1803. Under these Acts, commissioners were appointed to inquire into existing rights and ascertain the compensation to be paid, and their decrees were to be final. About £9,000 was paid over Charlton and £3,000 over Woolwich in extinction of commonable rights.

Armoy Water Supply.

MR. GLENDINNING (Antrim, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the inhabitants of Armoy, County Antrim, have no water supply of any kind, and that people are compelled to use the water of a well beside the Presbyterian burying ground, which water has over and over again been condemned by the medical officer of health; that the Ballycastle Rural Council have not taken any steps to provide a proper water supply for the town, although representations have been made to them and to the Local Government Board for the past eight years asking them to take action in this matter; and whether he will put pressure on the Local Government Board to compel the local sanitary authority to remedy this grievance.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Complaints have been made from time to time that the arrangements for the water supply of the town are not satisfactory, and the Local Government Board have brought these complaints to the notice of the rural district council, whose duty it is to see that a proper water supply is provided. It appears that the council have made borings for two pumps, but apparently the supply obtained therefrom is not considered to be sufficient for the needs of the whole town. A formal complaint has recently been made to the Local Government Board under Section 15 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1896, alleging that the rural district council have made default in the matter of providing a proper supply of water for the town, and this complaint is at present under the Board's consideration.

Drumkirk Evicted Tenant.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the inspector deputed by the Estates Commissioners to make inquiries with the view to the restoration of Mr. John F. McQuade to the holding from which he was formerly evicted in the townland of Drumkirk, on the Irvine estate, County Fermanagh, has yet furnished his report; and, if so, do the Commissioners intend to take immediate steps to restore McQuade to his holding, seeing his case has been under consideration for more than three years.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have considered their inspectors' report upon this case, and have made an offer to the owner for the purchase of the holding from which McQuade was evicted. The Commissioners will endeavour to restore the applicant to his former holding, or in the alternative, to provide him with another holding.

Estate Commissioners' Reports on Evicted Holdings.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution, adopted by the North-East Cork Executive of the United Irish League, at a meeting held in Fermoy on the 6th instant, pointing out the necessity for copies of reports made by Estates Commissioners' inspectors on cases of evicted tenants and on non-judicial holdings being supplied to the parties concerned; and if he can see his way to invite the attention of the Commissioners to the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The inspectors' reports are made for the information of the Estates Commissioners and are confidential documents, and the Commissioners do not consider that it would be proper to communicate them to the parties interested.

Rathlin Poor Law Valuation.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Poor Law valuation on the Island of Rathlin is in many cases more than double the old rent, and more than treble the judicial rent of the holdings; whether he can state if, in fixing the valuation, any account was taken of the hardships under which the islanders exist, or of the loss and danger to which the crops and live stock are exposed from wind and tide; and whether he will make inquiries with a view to a revision of the present valuation.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Commissioner of Valuation informs me that he has no information as regards the statement in the first part of the Question, but that the total Poor Law valuation of the land in Rathlin Island is £791, which is equivalent to an average of 4s. 5d. per acre. The Answer to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative. There is no power, I understand, under the existing law to make a revaluation; but the fact that the valuations are above or below the rent does not affect the amount of local taxation paid by the individual taxpayer so long as all the valuations in the rating area are determined upon a uniform and proportionate basis.

De Vesci Estate, Abbeyleix.

MR. P. MEEHAN (Queen's County, Leix): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in fifteen cases where judicial rents have been recently fixed on the De Vesci estate, Abbeyleix, Queen's County, appeals have been lodged by the landlord; and whether, in view of the fact that all those tenants are poor people, many of them being unable to provide the means of attending in Dublin with their witnesses, he will arrange for the appeals to be heard at Abbeyleix.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that no sitting has yet been fixed for the hearing of the appeals referred to in the Question. The place for holding the sitting will be considered by the Commissioners with due regard to the public convenience.

Bombay Political Department.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Committee appointed by the Viceroy to inquire into complaints made by a number of officers on the general cadre of the Political Department, in respect of their position under the reorganisation scheme, will also be empowered to consider the complaints of the military officers in the Bombay Political Department as to their position and prospects.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Secretary of State has no information beyond that which has appeared in the Press as to the Committee referred to. As regards the Bombay Political Department, I understand that the Government of Bombay will shortly submit proposals for improving the position of military officers of the Department.

Motor Traffic on Main Roads.

MR. LYULPH STANLEY (Cheshire, Eddisbury): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the injury to main roads caused by heavy motor traffic; and whether, in view of the fact that in many cases this injury is caused by heavy motors, the owners of which are not ratepayers in the county in which the injury is done, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to amend the law of rating, so that the burden of maintaining main roads should be more equitably distributed.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My attention has been called to this matter. It will receive consideration in connection with the subject of local taxation generally, but it would not be practicable to introduce legislation with regard to it at the present time.

Lewis Fishing Industry.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the weight and value of line-caught fish landed in the Island of Lewis for each year during the last fifteen years.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The following Table gives the information desired by my hon. friend, and I have also included the Returns which are available since 1898 of the average catch and value per boat—

Year.	Boats.	Catch.		Average catch per boat.	Average value per boat.
		Cwts.	£	Cwts.	£
1893	—	126,024	36,144	—	—
1894	—	90,973	26,236	—	—
1895	—	103,990	26,078	—	—
1896	—	115,690	23,294	—	—
1897	—	125,737	32,764	—	—
1898	666	100,413	25,184	151	38
1899	577	101,914	25,076	177	43
1900	615	83,842	21,255	136	35
1901	622	70,335	20,173	113	32
1902	599	49,318	16,671	82	38
1903	585	41,072	13,381	70	23
1904	488	76,011	24,556	156	50
1905	471	70,092	22,559	179	48
1906	469	73,074	25,107	156	54
1907	451	69,833	25,025	154	55

Glasgow Schools.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the cost of administration in the session 1907–1908 of the following two schools respectively, viz., Girls' High School, Glasgow, and Bridgeton Public School, Glasgow; and what was the number of pupils from each who took bursaries at the recent examination for bursaries in the Glasgow centre.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I have not the information required to enable me to reply to my hon. friend. The information would be more conveniently obtained by application to the school board.

Boy Clerks.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a new scheme for boy clerks is at present under consideration in Government Departments; whether the scheme provides for the payment to assistant clerks at twenty-five years of age of the salary of £85 per annum; and, if so, whether the Treasury will reconsider the scheme, so that the scale of salary may be made at least equivalent to the scale recently conceded to male sorters in the Post Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Answer to the first two parts of the Question is in the affirmative. The recent concession to the male sorters in the Post Office was made on the recommendation of the Committee, of which I was Chairman, upon the ground that a sorter attains full efficiency after five years of service, which, of course, is not true of an assistant clerk. But sorters work longer hours, and the conditions of service in the two cases are so different as to make inapplicable the comparison suggested.

Post Office Life Insurance.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: To ask the Postmaster-General whether the Committee, of which Lord Farrer is Chairman, to inquire whether it is desirable that steps should be taken to encourage the present life insurance system of the Post Office, and, if so, what steps, has yet reported; and whether the Committee has considered the advisability of appointing a specially trained man to manage the life insurance business, the desirability of severing the insurance business from the savings bank system of accounts, and the advantage of the payment of premiums by means of stamps.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have received and am considering the Report of the Committee, presided over by Lord Farrer, appointed to consider the desirability of encouraging the life insurance system of the Post Office, but I am not yet prepared to make any statement with regard to the Committee's recommendations. I take this opportunity of publicly thanking the Committee for the great consideration they have given to the question.

Suggested Civil Service Conciliation Board.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Postmaster-General if it is his intention to appoint a conciliation board composed of trade union representatives, staff and secretarial in equal numbers, to meet periodically for the decision of such questions as may arise; and, if not, will he consider the advisability of appointing such a board.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The Answer is in the negative.

Bexhill Post Office.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the date upon which the classification of the Bexhill Post Office for the indoor staff will be announced; and whether, in the event of changes being made, the staff will receive the benefit of such changes as from 1st January, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Bexhill, which is a salaried sub-office under Hastings, falls naturally into the new Class V. for the scale of pay of the indoor force. This announcement was made in a Post Office Circular, dated 8th July, 1908. The new classification dates from 1st January, 1908.

Country Postmen's Uniforms.

CAPTAIN CLIVE (Herefordshire, Ross). To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will consider the possibility of providing country postmen, who have long daily rounds to walk, with a thinner uniform in summer, as is now done in the case of the Metropolitan Police.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The whole question of the supply of uniform to Post Office servants is now under consideration. The point raised by the hon. Member shall have attention.

Kildorrery Assault Prosecution.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if his attention has been called to the proceedings at Kildorrery Petty Sessions on the 8th instant, when a man named William Stackpoole was charged with an assault endangering life upon John Galligan on 22nd May; whether Stackpoole was arrested and sent to prison at the time, bail having been refused in consequence of Galligan's life being in danger; and if he will explain why the magistrates refused informations in this case, although the assault, the serious nature of which was not disputed, was clearly proved to have been committed by Stackpoole; and if he will take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) My attention had not been called to this case, but

I am informed that the facts are as stated in the first two paragraphs of the Question. Informations were refused by the majority of the bench, but I have no information as to the magistrates' reasons or as to the nature of the evidence given before them. I will call for a full report upon the case with the view of considering whether further proceedings are necessary.

Communication with Rathlin Island.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether his attention has been drawn to the danger and difficulty experienced by the people of Rathlin Island in conveying passengers, live-stock, and goods to and from the mainland, and to the comparatively high cost of transportation, owing to the class of boats employed; and whether he will consider the practicability of such transport accommodation as will enable the islanders to enjoy a safe, cheap, and regular means of communication with the mainland.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) I am aware that the difficulties of transit to Rathlin Island are considerable. A better landing-place might be constructed at Rathlin at a comparatively reasonable expenditure, but the cost of providing a corresponding landing-place at Ballycastle on the mainland would probably run to £5,000 or more. A representative of the Department has visited the district in company with the piers committee of the county council, and it was decided, considering the difficulty mentioned, that present effort should be concentrated on Port Ballintoy, another harbour on the mainland opposite Rathlin which needs improvement. The cost of the minimum improvement at Rathlin would be £1,000, and the Department are prepared to consider such improvement if the county council will contribute to the cost. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the Bill now before Parliament will enable the council to increase their contribution.

London Stock Exchange Bye-Laws.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the committee of the London Stock Exchange are proposing new bye-laws which are restrictive in their character; and whether, with the view of safeguarding public interests and the exchange of business between financial centres, he will propose legislation.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I understand that the Stock Exchange Committee have certain new rules under consideration, but I am not aware of anything which would justify me in proposing legislative action in the matter.

Royal Engineer Volunteer Quartermaster.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for War when the scheme for the future employment of quartermasters of the late Royal Engineer Volunteer Corps will be communicated to them.

To ask the Secretary of State for War what decision, if any, has been reached as to the inclusion of quartermasters in the establishment of the Royal Engineer units of the Territorial Force; why the announcement of such decision has been so long delayed; whether the quartermasters of the late Royal Engineer Volunteer Corps will be permitted to attend the camp of their units and to receive pay and allowances this year; and what course will be taken as to the pay and allowances of those Royal Engineer quartermasters who have already this year attended the camp of their units.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The decision not to include quartermasters in the Royal Engineer units of the Territorial Force, other than certain corps for coast defence, was arrived at before the issue of the Special Army Order of 18th March, and they were not included in the establishment table in that Order. Since then the matter has been further considered and the previous decision was upheld. Accordingly, since 31st March there has been no such appointment as quartermaster in these units, and it is not understood how any persons could have attended the camps of such units as quartermasters.

Territorial Force Regulations.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Secretary of State for War when the Regulations for the Territorial Force will be issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The Regulations are being distributed as fast as they are supplied by the printers. The Yeomanry supply was despatched yesterday.

British Garrison in South Africa.

MR. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government contemplate withdrawing any of the British troops, now there, from South Africa, if so, what number of them and on what date; and whether, in the interest of economy, he has considered the desirability of concentrating the troops in South Africa nearer the coast, and what, if any, are his plans in this respect.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) One regiment of cavalry and four battalions of infantry will be withdrawn from South Africa on dates commencing with 7th September and ending on 6th February. The future disposition in South Africa of the garrison is now under consideration.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

The Coastguard.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any decision has yet been arrived at with reference to the number of men on the establishment of the Coastguard; and whether, if at any time it is decided to reduce the establishment, he can give an undertaking that no reduction will be made at those stations where the Coastguard are now employed in assisting in the saving of life at sea.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The further Report of the Inter-departmental Conference has not yet been received by the Admiralty, but in the meantime no reduction will be made of coastguard stations at which assistance in life-saving has hitherto been rendered.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH: Is it to be understood that no reduction will be made before next year's Estimates are introduced, or before the House has an opportunity of discussing any further reduction?

MR. McKENNA: I cannot say what the results of the Conference will be. But no reduction will be made before next year, and I anticipate the House will have some opportunity of discussing it early next session.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH: Did not the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor give a promise that there should be no further reduction until the House had had the opportunity of discussing it?

MR. McKENNA: I will look into that matter. I am not familiar with the terms of the pledge.

The Admiralty and the Press

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what rule or practice governs communications sent by the Admiralty to the Press; who frames these communications, and who is the responsible authority for them; are they invariably sent to the Press generally, or only to certain newspapers; and, in the latter case, on what principle is the selection made.

MR. McKENNA: Official communications to the Press, apart from advertisements, are placed in a room set apart for the purpose at the Admiralty, to which all newspaper representatives have access, or in the case of special communications, they are sent under cover to the principal Press agencies and newspapers which have offices in London. Special communications are framed by the Department which deals with the subject matter of the communication, and are issued with the authority of the Secretary of the Admiralty.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): Are we to understand that all newspapers are treated on an equal footing by the Admiralty and that no editors or Press correspondents have special access to any official at the Admiralty?

MR. McKENNA: I think my Answer is complete on the subject. I have told the House the full relations of the Admiralty with the Press.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Are we to take it for granted that the interests of our friend *The Times* are specially safeguarded? This is specially important.

[No Answer was returned.]

The Mediterranean Fleet.

MR. DU CROS (Hastings): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the longest period spent in harbour at one time by the Mediterranean Fleet during the years 1907 and 1908 respectively.

MR. McKENNA: The longest continuous period spent in harbour, as a Fleet, by the Mediterranean Fleet during 1907, was three months, and during 1908, one month; but individual ships are continually going out during such periods to perform gunnery and torpedo exercises.

The Home Fleet.

MR. DU CROS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will furnish a Return showing the amount of training at sea which the squadrons of the Home Fleet have received during the current year and the amount of fleet training.

MR. McKENNA: As stated in answer to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for West Marylebone on 8th August last, the required information is not available at the Admiralty, and it would entail great labour to call for a precise Return from each of the large number of ships forming the Home Fleet.

Yeomanry Forage Contracts.

*MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether commanding officers of Yeomanry regiments must now obtain their supplies of hay and corn through Government contractors instead of by local purchase; whether he is aware that many commanding officers had, in 1907, made local contracts for the 1908 training, and will, in consequence of the new Regulation, be put to considerable expense in repudiating those contracts; and whether he can see his way in such cases to relax the Regulation.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. HALDANE, Haddington): It is the intention that the supply of forage to Yeomanry regiments during training should in future be made by contract or local purchase under War Office supervision on the same line as the supply to the Regular Army. Cases brought to notice of arrangements made regimentally by commanding officers for the supply of forage for the training during 1908 have been specially sanctioned. I will consider whether any, and what relaxation of the broad principle might be made, in order to admit of the advantage of local knowledge and influence of Territorial officers being obtained.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Will the War Office compensate those officers who have entered into contracts for 1908?

MR. HALDANE: That will be considered.

*MR. LAMONT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in one case last year, the commanding officer contracted locally at £4 10s., whereas the Government contractor is now asking £5 5s.?

MR. HALDANE: Sometimes commanding officers did make a good bargain and the benefit went to the funds of the corps. That is the kind of thing we want to eliminate now.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Does the right hon. Gentleman really mean that in order to obviate the possibility of the profit going to the corps fund, a higher price is to be paid to contractors?

MR. HALDANE: We want to get the assistance and advice of Territorial officers for the benefit of the general system, and we relieve commanding officers of the responsibility for these things, and adopt the plan which obtains in the Army generally.

Special Trains for Territorial Camps.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone): On behalf of the hon. Member for Kingston, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company have refused to provide special trains for the purpose of taking certain battalions of the Territorial Force to camp for training on 1st August, the reason given being that all the rolling stock is required for holiday traffic; whether the commanding officers consider it essential that the men should reach camp on the day named; and whether the Government propose to take any and what action in the matter.

MR. HALDANE: Nothing is known at the War Office of this matter. I would remind the hon. and learned Member that I have no power to compel the company to carry those men in special trains.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: Can the right hon. Gentleman make some recommendation with a view to inducing the company to comply with the request?

MR. HALDANE: We will do the best we can.

Territorial Adjutants.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of appointing as adjutants to the Territorial Force officers only who have been adjutants of their own regular units; and whether, should these appointments be confined to such officers, he would be prepared when their term had expired to recommend them where possible for positions on the Territorial divisional staffs.

MR. HALDANE: Every endeavour is made to select the most suitable officers for these important appointments, and when a candidate has already served as adjutant of his unit, that fact is given due weight in considering his suitability. At the same time the number of applicants would scarcely justify an undertaking that the appointments should be wholly restricted to officers with the suggested experience. Similarly in the selection of Regular officers for the divisional staffs, previous experience as an adjutant of the Auxiliary Forces has already been allowed to carry considerable weight, and this procedure will be followed in the future.

Degradation of a Fife Yeoman.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydfil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the circumstances attending the degradation for alleged disobedience of Private James Rennie, of the A squadron of the Fife and Forfar Imperial Yeomanry at their annual training camp at Annsmuir, Ladybank, on 27th June; whether Rennie was taken under escort to the centre of the square and informed that he had been sentenced to be drummed out of the regiment, and was thereupon deprived of his cap and had the buttons and decorations cut from his tunic, and was thereafter marched outside the camp; what was the offence for which this punishment was inflicted, and what opportunity had Rennie for defending himself; and what regulations authorise this form of punishment without trial.

MR. HALDANE: The facts of this case are substantially those described in the Question, with the addition that the commanding officer reports that Private Rennie was provided with a civilian overcoat and money necessary for his journey. The offence was disobedience of orders to his troop officer. The usual inquiry was held by his commanding officer and the summary of evidence forwarded to the General Officer Commanding with an application for the man's trial by court-martial. The general reports that as he received the application only on the day before the regiment left camp, he directed the commanding officer to deal summarily with the case. The commanding officer under the powers vested in him by

Section 181 (6) of the Army Act dismissed the man. The procedure adopted by the commanding officer in dismissing the man was highly improper, and he has been so informed by the Army Council. This method of public marching out is obsolete in the British Army, and certainly should not have been adopted in this case. I must add that there is no reason to doubt that Rennie deserved to be dismissed from the regiment, or to question the sufficiency of the investigation.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Is it not the case that Rennie was refused his pay and travelling allowance for his horse, and had to borrow money to pay his train fare home; and were not the captain and sergeant-major both allowed to testify to the commanding officer against Rennie, while Rennie was not permitted to state his own case, or give evidence on his own behalf?

Mr. HALDANE: I have no knowledge of these circumstances, but if the hon. Member will put down a Question I will make inquiry. I would point out, however, that I am informed, and I have no reason to doubt it, that Rennie was provided with a civilian overcoat and the money for his journey.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Has the right hon. Gentleman received a copy of the letter sent to Lord Lovat in connection with this case, in which all the facts I have stated are set forth?

Mr. HALDANE: I have not seen the letter, but if the hon. Member will put down another Question I will make inquiry.

Military Churches in India.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether any of the churches attached to the military stations in India which have been consecrated to the Episcopalian form of worship have at any time been used by any other denomination for any other form of service; and, if so, where and when.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): If the hon. Member will refer to the Memorandum prefixed to the Papers recently presented to Parliament (Cd. 4022), he will see that consecrated churches at military stations in India have frequently, with the consent of the Bishops, been used for Presbyterian and Wesleyan services, except for the celebration of the Communion.

Dr. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): At whose cost were those churches built? At the cost of the Anglicans or the Indians?

Mr. BUCHANAN: For the most part the cost came out of the Indian Exchequer.

Dr. RUTHERFORD: That is, the Indian taxpayer?

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. C. E. PRICE asked whether it would not be possible to use those churches now as had been done in the past, so that Scottish regiments could be moved about in India as the military authorities desired.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he could not accept the statement that the movements of the Scottish regiments in India were impeded by anything the Government did at the present time.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) asked whether it was not the fact that there was increased opposition on the part of the Anglican Church to giving Presbyterians the right to the use of those churches built by the State in India.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the Memorandum contained the whole history of the question. He did not think it could be fairly said that since 1899 there had been any alteration or exacerbation of the attitude of the Anglican Church towards Nonconformists.

*Mr. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Will the hon. Gentleman bring influence to bear on the metropolitan to induce the bishops to consent to the extended use of these churches by Presbyterians?

MR. BUCHANAN: If the hon. Member will refer to the Papers he will see that the Government have done everything they can to induce the metropolitan and other bishops to adopt the attitude which my hon. friend desires in regard to the use of these churches for the celebration of the most sacred rites of our religion.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Has consent ever been given by Anglican authorities for the use of these churches for Presbyterian services?

MR. BUCHANAN: I have said so.

Punjab Irrigation Works.

MR. C. J. O'DONNELL (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the net profit from Government irrigation works in the Punjab last year was roundly £1,000,000, or 13 per cent. on the capital invested; whether it was as high as 25 per cent. on the Chenab Canal system, which includes the Sikh Colonies; and whether, seeing that excessive irrigation rates have been judicially declared to be the chief cause of unrest amongst the Sikh population, he will say what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. BUCHANAN: The figures given in the Question are approximately correct. There is no evidence, so far as the Secretary of State is aware, that the rates on the Chenab Canal are excessive, or that they are the cause of unrest. Proposals for raising existing rates on the Bari Doab Canal occasioned some discontent, but the new rates were not put in force, and the lieutenant-governor undertook to re-examine them. The Chenab rates, judging from the competition for land and its selling price, leave large profits to the cultivator.

MR. C. J. O'DONNELL: Was it not mentioned and accepted by the judicial authorities that the riots were due to the excessive taxation of land?

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Was not the judicial opinion that the increase of the rate induced the riots, and not that the rate itself was excessive?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think there was any specific allegation that the irrigation rates on the Chenab Canal were excessive and were the cause of any unrest or trouble in the locality.

*MR. SMEATON: Was not the capital for the construction of this canal obtained by loan and do not the Sikh peasants, as taxpayers, contribute their share of the interest due on the money borrowed; and is it reasonable that these peasants should at the same time be charged these excessive rates? Is it fair?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is an argumentative Question.

Uganda Import Duties.

MR. SMEATON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the officials in the Uganda Protectorate are required to pay 10 per cent. duty on all articles of food, clothing, and other necessaries of life which, owing to the difficulty in obtaining local supplies, they are obliged to import; whether the Governor receives a special allowance to meet the import charges on all articles which he imports; and whether it is contemplated to make some similar allowances to the officials of the Protectorate.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): In accordance with the practice formerly prevailing in most Colonies, the Governor of Uganda was until recently exempted from the payment of Custom duties. This exemption is now being abolished in the Colonies, and in Uganda a duty allowance has been granted to the Governor in lieu of it. It is not proposed to give allowances to other officials, who never enjoyed the exemption; but the cost of living in the Protectorate is naturally one of the factors considered in fixing their emoluments.

Uganda Officials' Insurance against Loss.

MR. SMEATON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that one guinea is annually deducted from the salary of every administrative officer in the Uganda Protectorate as premium of an insurance against loss in the money transactions of those officers; whether the insurance office to which this premium is paid is the Crown Agent of the Colony; whether in cases of loss of money, notwithstanding the insurance with the Crown Agent, the officers concerned are required to make good the amounts lost; whether this one guinea premium is retained by the Crown Agent, notwithstanding that no loss has occurred; and whether it is intended that this system shall continue.

COLONEL SEELY: Administrative officers in Uganda are secured under an agreement with the Law Guarantee and Trust Society, Limited, for £200 each at annual premiums of £1 each. The agreement is to protect the Government against the risk of its being unable to recover from an officer moneys lost by his default, and does not protect the officer from having to make good such moneys. The premiums are paid over to the insurance company, and are not retained by the Crown Agents, who are simply the agents through whom the money is paid to the company by the Protectorate Government. The question of modifying the system of securities now in force in the Crown Colonies and Protectorates is under consideration.

Natal Indemnity Bill.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has now been made acquainted with the provisions of the Natal Indemnity Bill.

COLONEL SEELY: No, Sir. The Natal Ministry has been under reconstruction owing to the retirement of a member from ill-health, and the settlement of this and other matters has, no doubt, been delayed in consequence.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): What will occur if this House declines to give the indemnity?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical Question.

Tilonko.

MR. G. GREENWOOD: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to a petition recently presented to the House of Commons by the Zulu chief, Tilonko, who is now undergoing a term of ten years imprisonment with hard labour in St. Helena, under sentence of a court martial passed upon him in Natal on 17th August, 1906, more than a month after the passing, by both Houses of the Colonial Legislature, of the Natal Indemnity Act of that year, but before such Act had received the Royal assent; and whether in view of the fact that under the provisions of that Act no appeal is allowed from the sentence of any court martial held in Natal previously to the passing thereof, and that Tilonko is thereby debarred from all legal remedy by way of appeal either to the Privy Council or to the Supreme Court of Natal; he will consider the desirability of advising the Crown to exercise the prerogative of mercy in this case.

COLONEL SEELY: The Prime Minister has asked me to reply to this Question. I have seen the petition referred to. A similar petition was recently presented to His Majesty, and on the advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was referred to the Governor of Natal for such action, if any, as he may be advised to take. No further action in the matter is at present possible.

MR. G. GREENWOOD: Is not the Government prepared to consider all the facts with a view to advising the exercise of the prerogative of mercy?

COLONEL SEELY: I have said that no action is at present possible.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked was it not the fact that the exercise of the prerogative would be on the advice of the Natal Government, under whose system of martial law this chief was condemned to a long term of imprisonment.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) asked if the Prime Minister would give his personal attention to the matter, as many persons believed the man to have been illegally convicted.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.) said he would be happy to do so, but he could not hold out any expectation that the result would be other than that referred to in the answer given by his hon. and gallant friend.

Morocco.

Mr. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the French have occupied the town of Azimur in Morocco, and on so doing forced the governor to proclaim Mulia Abd El Assiz sultan, the said governor being appointed by Mulia Hafid; and, if so, whether this constitutes an infraction of the Act of Algeciras, which provides that there shall be no interference with the internal affairs of the country.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): It appears from the information which has reached me that French troops did not occupy Azemour, and that the reconnaissance towards that town was only undertaken in connection with the pacification of the Shawia district, into which large supplies of arms were being passed through Azemour. The answer to the second part of the Question is in the negative.

Persian Constitution.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the text of Article 45 of the Persian Constitution provides that the Royal Firmans will be sanctioned only when they have received the signature of a responsible minister, and in that case the minister will be responsible for them; will he ascertain whether the military operations which resulted in the sacking of the Persian Parliament House and the suppression of the Parliament were conducted by Colonel Liakhoff and other Russian officers, and, if so, whether the orders executed by them were sanctioned by a responsible minister; and whether, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, it is in accordance with the spirit of the Anglo-Russian Agreement that military officers lent by Russia to the Persian Government shall direct the suppression by force of arms of the rights guaranteed to the Persian people by their Constitution.

Sir EDWARD GREY: This is practically the same Question as the hon. Member asked me two days ago, and I am not prepared to give any other reply than I gave then. I have been dealing by telegram with the points which were most urgent in connection with the recent crisis at Teheran; and I cannot form an opinion, and still less say whether it is necessary to express an opinion, upon other matters connected with the proceedings of the Shah and officers in his service till I receive full Reports.

Scottish Expenditure.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is estimated to be the total expenditure out of the Exchequer, or out of taxes raised by the authority of Parliament, upon purely Scottish purposes in the year 1908–9.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): The total expenditure on Scottish services in 1908–9, as provided for in the Budget, is estimated at £6,608,000.

Mr. REES: Will the right hon. Gentleman give the figures for purely Welsh purposes?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I must ask for notice.

Mr. WATT: How much was raised by taxation in Scotland?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I must ask for notice of that also.

Prison Trade Instructors.

Mr. WILES (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether complaints have been brought to his notice of the length of time certain prison officers known as trade instructors are compelled to stand on small platforms overlooking prisoners under their charge; and whether, having regard to the fact that several of these officials have suffered considerably from swollen veins and legs caused by such long periods of standing, he will cause stools to be provided for those who take this special kind of duty.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): No complaints of this nature have been brought to the notice of the Commissioners. Trade instructors do not stand on platforms, but walk about instructing prisoners. It would be quite impossible for them, or for any other officers, to carry out their duties properly if seated on stools. No reports of officers suffering from swollen veins or legs have been received for a very long time.

West Ham Guardians Trial—Treatment of Prison Witnesses.

MR. J. M. MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Hitchin Division of Herts, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that on Tuesday a witness for the Crown named Calcutt, who is at present undergoing a term of imprisonment in one of His Majesty's gaols, was brought into Court for the purpose of giving evidence in a case now proceeding at the Central Criminal Court without having received any food since he began work at 5.30 a.m., and that the Judge adjourned the case in consequence; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

MR. GLADSTONE: The facts are not quite accurately stated. The prisoner was employed in cleaning from 6.5 to 6.50. Breakfast was provided for him at 7.0, but he refused to eat any. He was not put to any further work before leaving for the Court. Although it was his own fault that he had no breakfast, I do not think the arrangements were wholly satisfactory, and instructions have been given to ensure his being properly fed at a later hour before he gives his evidence. He will not do prison work while his examination is going on, and will also have special opportunities for exercise.

Factory Inspector's Report.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state when the annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories is to be published.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Stationery Office informs me that the Report will be issued to-morrow.

Fencing of Disused Pits.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to the number of drowning accidents which have recently occurred in the West Cheshire district due to the unprotected state in which disused clay and other pits are left; and whether he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation to so amend the provisions of The Quarry (Fencing) Act, 1887, as to empower local authorities to require that dangerous pits accessible to the public shall be properly fenced.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention has been called to a recent case of drowning in a disused clay pit in West Cheshire. The Quarry (Fencing) Act provides for the fencing of dangerous quarries situate in open or unenclosed land within fifty yards of a public place, and gives power to a local authority to enforce the requirement. Some amendment of the provisions of the Act with a view to securing greater safety for the public is perhaps desirable, and the point has been noted for consideration in connection with the next amendment of he law relating to quarries.

Load Lines.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, in view of the statement made to the House on 4th April, 1906, to the effect that negotiations were proceeding with Germany with a view to an arrangement being arrived at under which each country would accept load-lines assigned by the other, if he is in a position to state the result of such negotiations; whether such negotiations had anything to do with the altering of the load-line; and whether the men engaged in the mercantile marine were at all consulted in the matter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The negotiations with Germany as to the freeboard regulations of each country being treated as equally effective as their own by the other are almost concluded, and I have every hope that the result will be satisfactory to both countries. These negotiations were not entered into until after the revision of the British Load-Line Tables had been completed. This revision was the outcome of representations and conferences which had been in progress since 1899 between the Board of Trade and the other assigning bodies; and in the course of that revision the German Regulations of 1903 were duly considered. As the matter was one purely for technical experts it was not considered necessary to consult representatives of officers and seamen with regard to it.

MR. SUMMERBELL: Is the old load-line to be restored?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am unable to forecast the decision of the Committee.

Overcrowding on the District Railway.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the continued overcrowding which still takes place on most of the trains of the DistrictRailway in spite of the assurances of the company to Parliament that they were closely watching the traffic and making arrangements accordingly; if his attention has been called to the fact that, except during certain hours in the mornings and evenings, the District trains consist of not more than two ordinary and one first-class carriage; and whether, considering the great overcrowding which takes place on these three-carriage trains, he will see that at any rate a fourth carriage is provided on such trains.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Board of Trade are informed that the railway company are at present putting all their rolling stock through the shops for thorough overhaul and for the removal of the pneumatic arrangements controlling the carriage doors, and the substitution of latches. The company expect that this work will be finished by the autumn and they then intend to increase the number of carriages on their trains. In the meantime they state that they do not anticipate that there will be any cause for complaint with regard to overcrowding as during the holiday season the traffic on their line is considerably decreased.

MR. POWER asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that on the Circle line every train was composed of four carriages, and that every train was full. Might he assure him that the overcrowding on the District Railway went on every day, as Members of the House could testify?

MR. KEIR HARDIE asked whether four carriages could not be put on every train on the District Railway at certain hours every day.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): Has the right hon. Gentleman contemplated, in the event of an accident, the serious results which might follow from this overcrowding?

MR. CHURCHILL said he would address the railway company on the subject, and acquaint them with the statements made in the House; but the information he had given was that which had been furnished by the company.

MR. POWER: The right hon. Gentleman has been quite deceived by the reply of the company.

MR. CHURCHILL: I hope it is not so bad as all that.

The Board of Trade and International Exhibitions.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Board of Trade has set up a Department to deal with International Exhibitions, with an honorary director for art sections, British art; whether he will give the names of the members of the new Department and of the director; and whether he proposes to appoint an Irish director for the supervision of Irish art.

MR. CHURCHILL: In reply to my hon. friend, I beg to state that the Board of

Trade have established a new branch of their Commercial Department to deal with matters arising out of the possible participation of Great Britain and Ireland in future international exhibitions. Mr. U. F. Wintour has been appointed officer in charge of the Exhibition Branch, Sir Isidore Spielmann, C.M.G., has also been appointed Honorary Director for British (including Irish) Art at International Exhibitions. When the necessary arrangements are being made for particular exhibitions care will be taken that the interests of Irish art and industry shall intimately be studied, but I am not advised that the appointment of a permanent officer is necessary.

Misleading Cigar Boxes.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the President of he Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to certain prosecutions for the purpose of restraining the British manufacturers of cigars from using boxes with labels printed in Spanish as being contrary to the law of merchandise marks; whether his attention has also been drawn to the fact that cigars in boxes, with labels printed in Spanish, are imported from countries where Spanish is not more commonly spoken than it is in Great Britain; and whether he proposes, in view of the handicap which this places upon the British manufacturer, to equalise the administration of the law between British manufacturer and foreign importer.

MR. CHURCHILL: My attention has been called to the prosecutions referred to. I entirely agree with the hon. Member that there should be equality in the administration of the law between British and foreign manufacturers, and I am now in communication with the Customs on the subject.

Members' Privileges—Free Postage.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether letters directed by Members of Parliament to public officials or departments, such as the Irish Land Commissioners, are entitled to go stamp free.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Members of Parliament have no special postal privileges. Generally speaking, any letter on official business, which is directed to a Metropolitan Government Department, such as the Irish Land Commission, or to one of the chief officials of such a Government Department at his official address, may be posted without a stamp.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND inquired if letters addressed to Government Departments in Ireland, with which hon. Members had to communicate very frequently, needed to be stamped.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON replied that the Metropolitan Departments would cover London, Edinburgh, and Dublin.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Then I have paid a lot of money unnecessarily—money which I could ill afford.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am afraid I cannot undertake to refund any money paid.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Can letters to the Estates Commissioners be sent without stamps?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON was understood to reply in the affirmative.

Dublin Post Office—Stores Department Clerks' Salaries.

MR. CREAN (Cork, S.E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the salary of third-class clerks in the Stores Department, Dublin, is £15 a year less than the same class in London; whether the candidates for this class in both cities have to pass the same competitive examination and are performing identical duties; whether, seeing that the Hobhouse Committee has recommended equality of treatment, he will say whether this recommendation has been acted on in connection with the second division, assistant, and women clerks employed at the Dublin Post Office; and, if so, whether he can say why an exception has been made in the case of third class clerks in Dublin.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not know what recommendation of the Hobhouse Committee the hon. Member refers to. The pay of the third class clerks has been fixed on the analogy of that of third class clerks in engineering offices, for whom the Select Committee recommended a difference in emoluments to the extent of £15, in favour of those employed in London. The recommendations of the Committee did not cover second division and assistant clerks as such officers belong to classes not exclusively employed in the Post Office. As regards the women clerks the Committee recommended a somewhat lower scale for women clerks in Dublin and Edinburgh than for those employed in London.

Postal Officials and Betting Telegrams.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has been taking action upon complaints recently sent to him from betting agents, whose headquarters are on the Continent, alleging that members of the Post Office staff are guilty of malpractices in connection with the transmission of bets through the post; whether he has taken steps to protect postmen, otherwise than by punishing those who have been found guilty, from the temptations placed in their way by the advertisements of these betting agents; and whether he has taken any steps to make it difficult for these agents to use the Post Office for their purposes.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is obviously necessary to investigate complaints which impute malpractices to members of the Post Office staff, and to take action according to the result of such investigations. Illegal advertisements of betting agents are stopped if they are posted in open covers; but I have no power to open or detain closed letters, on the suspicion that they contain such circulars. I have recently taken steps to withhold in such cases facilities for prepayment of postage in money. I may add that the whole question of lottery and other circulars is under the consideration of a Joint Committee of both Houses, and my Department have given evidence before the Committee.

House of Commons Medicine Chest.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he is aware that some years ago it was arranged, as a provision in case of accident or illness of Members or others persons in the Houses of Parliament, that a properly-equipped medicine chest would be provided, and also a room in which those needing prompt medical attention could be treated; whether he is aware that on a recent occasion, when a Member of the House required medical aid, it was found that the so-called medical chest consisted of a small basket less than twelve inches square, which did not contain the most ordinary first-aid requirements, some of which had to be obtained from a neighbouring hospital; whether he can explain this state of things; and will he invite some of the medical Members of the House to suggest what necessary medicines and medical appliances should be provided, and see that they are available in the shortest possible time in case of accident or sudden illness.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. L. Harcourt, Lancashire, N.E., Rossendale): The Sergeant-at-Arms has for many years generously placed his room at the disposal of Members when medical attention is required. I much regret to hear that the medicine chest on a recent occasion was found to be insufficiently equipped, but I am informed that the material required was available in the box attached to the ambulance if that had been examined. I shall take immediate steps to obtain the best gratuitous advice from the medical Members of this House as to what is required, and see that it is provided and is easily and immediately available in case of emergency.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN asked who was responsible for not having examined the alleged medicine chest on this particular occasion.

Mr. L. HARCOURT: The whole matter is very complicated. It was decided two years ago that it would be impossible to bear the expense of such a service on any of the Votes. Therefore we are indebted to the generosity of the hon.

Member for Edinburgh University for the provision of the medicine chest. When it required to be replenished a year ago, owing to the difficulty that faced me in view of the Comptroller and Auditor-General, I was compelled to ask the same hon. Member to replenish it at his own expense. I have made arrangements recently by which I hope to be able to supply the necessities of all Members.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): Will you have to get an outdoor medical relief order?

Kew Gardens Painters.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he could state whether any extra pay is allowed the workmen employed, either by day or contract work, while employed painting and cleaning the dangerous parts of the palm house or pagoda in the Royal Gardens at Kew; and, if so, how much.

MR. HARCOURT: The reply to the first paragraph is in the negative. The contractors, however, pay a heavy premium upon the insurance of workmen engaged on this work, amounting to 40s. per cent., which is considerably above the ordinary rate.

Elementary School Teachers.

SIR THOMAS ROE (Derby): On behalf of the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk, I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will publish the next result list of the preliminary examination for the elementary school teachers' certificate, with the names in order of merit, and indicate those who have stated their desire to enter a training college.

I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will consider the desirability of paying the grants for the maintenance of training colleges and hostels in respect of individual students selected according to the order of merit, as shown by the preliminary examination for the elementary school teacher's certificate, instead of paying grants in respect of whichever students the colleges choose to admit.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. McKINNON WOOD, Glasgow, St. Rollox): The preliminary examination, as at present organised, is designed to establish a standard rather than to afford a test of comparative merit. There are serious objections to the adoption of the scheme suggested in these Questions. A considerable number of colleges have been, or are being, provided by local education authorities, who naturally desire to give preference to candidates residing in their own areas, and for other colleges connected with Universities certain special educational qualifications will always be needed. To require that candidates should be admitted to the training colleges strictly in an order of merit based on the single examination test suggested would lower the educational standard of the colleges and discourage local authorities from any further efforts to provide for the training of their teachers. It would also, I imagine, preclude the acceptance by the Board of any examination other than the preliminary as qualifying for admission to a training college. Moreover, a single examination, especially when attended by 20,000 candidates, is generally admitted to be an unsatisfactory test by itself. In the opinion of the Board, the authorities of training colleges, with a view to selecting the most suitable students, ought to be at liberty to supplement the examination results by reports from the authorities of the schools at which the candidates have been educated. These reports, in the opinion of the Board, are decidedly more valuable than the evidence obtained from a competitive examination.

Kew Gardens.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state by whose authority a large quantity of choice hardy shrubs and herbaceous and alpine plants were removed from the Royal Gardens, Kew, to No 4, Branston Road, Kew; whether any workmen from the

Royal Gardens were employed on this private work; whether such action is contrary to the rules of the Gardens; and, if so, what action, if any, he intends to take in regard to the matter.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): A number of surplus shrubs and plants were with the authority of the director moved by the employees at the Gardens to the residence of the Assistant-Director, who has recently been appointed. The Board are informed that a similar practice has always obtained when a new officer takes up his duties at Kew.

MR. SUMMERBELL: Did not the hon. Gentleman say a short time ago that no privileges were allowed to the Assistant-Director or Director at Kew?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I must ask for notice of that.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I will certainly give it.

Clergy Pensions.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for the Crewe Division, as representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whether his attention has been directed to the scheme for clergy pensions recently inaugurated by the Commissioners; whether he is aware that one-third of the parochial clergy, viz.: assistant stipendiary curates, are excluded from the benefits of the scheme; will he say whether this exclusion is due to any limitation by Statute of the Commissioners' powers; and, if so, whether the Commissioners will consider the advisability of applying to Parliament for powers to enable them to extend their scheme so as to include the most necessitous class of the clergy.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe): Having regard to the limitations imposed by Statute upon the application of the Common Fund of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners the scheme for pensions to aged or infirm incumbents recently inaugurated by the Commissioners cannot without fresh legislation be extended to unbeneficed clergymen.

MR. RADFORD: Arising out of the reply, I observe that the hon. Gentleman has not replied to the latter part of the Question, viz.: whether the Commissioners will consider the advisability of applying to Parliament for powers to enable them to extend their scheme so as to include the most necessitous class of the clergy. If he has no reply ready on the spur of the moment, will he kindly confer with the Commissioners on the subject?

MR. TOMKINSON: The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are constantly considering questions such as this, and have considered the Question of the hon. Gentleman. I am afraid that they feel that no useful purpose would be served by applying to Parliament for fresh powers to extend the application of their funds in the direction desired by the hon. Gentleman.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): Am I to understand that poor curates are entirely excluded from the benefit of the scheme?

MR. TOMKINSON: Yes, Sir; I understand that retired curates do not come within the scope of the application of the surplus revenue of the Commissioners. The application of the surplus revenue in the hands of the General Commissioners is limited to the "Cure of Souls"—and a pension to a retired curate does not fall within that limit. Subventions to retirement can be made only to incumbents of benefices, and in order to prevent the stipend of a benefice being unduly reduced by the pension of the retiring incumbent and to enable worn-out incumbents to make way for more effective men.

Clyde Pilot's Grievance.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will take any steps to obtain a reconsideration of the exceptional circumstances of the case of a Clyde pilot tried on 15th May last at Glasgow before the Sheriff of Lanark, who sat without the assistance of nautical assessors, although the case rested entirely on points of practical navigation and local pilotage knowledge.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The Prime Minister has requested me to answer this Question, and I have only to say that after full consideration I have nothing to add to my Answer of 6th July to the effect that a rehearing of the case is not legally competent, and as to reduction of penalty I do not see my way to interfere.

MR. JOYCE: The unsatisfactory Answer I have received in regard to this case has caused a great deal of unrest among the pilots of the United Kingdom, and I hope they will go to a higher authority than this House—to the King himself.

Limerick Labourers' Cottage Scheme.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what is the cause of the delay in the publication of the result of the inquiry into the labourers' scheme of the Limerick (No. 2) District Council held last March.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The inspector's order was signed on the 10th instant, and copies have now been forwarded to the rural district council.

Riverstown Band and Police.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, on the night of the 3rd July instant, the sergeant in charge of the Royal Irish Constabulary, in Riverstown, County Sligo, entered the yard rented by the local band committee and ordered a baton charge; and, if so, will he state under what law police are empowered to enter the private rented premises of any band committee.

MR. BIRRELL: The police authorities inform me that it is not the fact that the sergeant or any of the police entered the premises of the band committee at Riverstown on the occasion in question. It was necessary that the police, in the discharge of their duty, should keep the band and its followers under observation because of their intimidatory conduct towards the owners of grazing farms whose cattle had been driven. The crowd assumed a threatening attitude towards the sergeant, who ordered the police to draw batons, but there was no necessity to use them as the crowd thereupon withdrew quietly. The incident occurred upon the public road.

Proclamation of Sligo County.

MR. O'DOWD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland will he state the grounds on which the Lords Justices issued a proclamation declaring the county of Sligo to be in a disturbed state; whether such proclamation was due to depositions made by certain civilians in the district of Riverstown, in that county; and, if so, can he give the names of these persons.

MR. BIRRELL: The county of Sligo was proclaimed by the Lords Justices as being in a state of disturbance upon information furnished by the responsible police authorities to the effect that cattle-driving and other forms of intimidation were prevalent in the county. No depositions were made in the matter.

MR. O'DOWD: Arising out of the reply, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact that in his charge to the Grand Jury at the recent Sligo Assizes, Judge Johnson made no reference whatever to the alleged disturbed state of the county; and whether he is aware that the foreman of the Grand Jury, who is a Unionist and also Lord-Lieutenant of the county, absolutely refused to make any representations to his Lordship on the subject.

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

Riverstown Boycotting Case.

MR. O'DOWD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that Catherine Cogan, of Riverstown, County Sligo, has repudiated all knowledge of boycotting and intimidation having been directed against her; and, if so, will he say whether this was one of the reported cases used as a justification for having extra police drafted into a peaceable district.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed by the police authorities that Mrs. Cogan's name has never appeared on the list of persons who are subject to boycotting and intimidation. The case, therefore, has had no bearing upon the appointment of additional police to County Sligo.

Mr. O'DOWD: Arising out of the reply, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact that in May last a meeting was held in an out-of-the-way Mayo village, between the Vice-President of the Local Government Board and the representative of the Landowners' Association, and whether it was in consequence of this meeting that the county was proclaimed?

Mr. BIRRELL said he had no knowledge of such a meeting.

Work of the Irish Congested Districts Board.

Mr. KAVANAGH (Carlow): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government have yet considered the Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland; if so, whether it is intended to carry out the recommendations of the Commission by legislation, and, if so, when; and in the meantime what provisions, if any, have been made to enable the Congested Districts Board to continue their land-purchasing operations.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland is under the consideration of the Government, and, as I have already announced, it is proposed to introduce legislation on the subject in the coming autumn. The question of increasing the statutory income of the Congested Districts Board cannot be dealt with apart from that legislation, and consequently the Board cannot in the meantime incur fresh liabilities by proceeding with the purchase of estates generally. The hon. Member, however, will be aware, from my Answer to the hon. Member for East Mayo on 7th instant, that arrangements are under consideration whereby the Board may at once be placed in funds for proceeding with the improvement of estates already purchased.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) May I ask whether the question of increasing the income of the Congested Districts Board and the question of enabling them to carry on the work for the time being are not entirely distinct questions? And am I right in gathering from the right hon. Gentleman's Answer that, pending the consideration of legislation in the autumn, no provision is to be made to enable the Congested Districts Board to carry on its work in the meantime?

Mr. BIRRELL: What is now under consideration is a loan to the Board to enable it to carry on its work in the meantime.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Its land purchase work?

Mr. BIRRELL: No, its general work.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Do the Government intend to suspend the operation of land purchase in the meantime.

*Mr. BIRRELL: The Congested Districts Board have recently decided to purchase eight large estates on my advice and there is no reason to increase further their purchases of land within the next few months.

Mr. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): Will this loan enable the Congested Districts Board to purchase selected estates for which negotiations have been going on for the past twelve months?

*Mr. BIRRELL: The Congested Districts Board under my advice some months ago agreed to negotiate for the purchase of several very large estates amounting to enormous sums of money. These will be proceeded with. The loan is to enable the Board, pending the consideration of increasing their statutory income, to proceed with improvements.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Will this loan obviate the threatened dismissal of the workmen under the Board?

Mr. BIRRELL: I cannot quite answer that Question until the amount of the loan is determined.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: Will steps be taken by the right hon. Gentleman to press upon the Government as a whole the extreme seriousness of the situation if these men are all dismissed and the whole work of the Board brought to a standstill?

Mr. BIRRELL: The whole object of the loan is to prevent the operations of the Board being brought to a standstill. I am fully alive to the importance of that.

Ulster Catholics and University Education.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what provision he proposes to make for the University education of Catholics in Ulster, who form half the population of that province, seeing that no facilities are given to them in the Irish Universities Bill, whilst two colleges, Belfast and Magee, are provided for Presbyterians, who form only one-third of the population of Ulster.

Mr. BIRRELL: I do not propose to make any further provision for University education.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of providing a college for West Ulster where most of the Catholics are?

Mr. BIRRELL: I cannot do more at the present moment than promote the interests of the University of Belfast, and I hope they will attend there.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Will the Catholics there not have the same privileges as the non-Catholics of Cork and Dublin?

Mr. BIRRELL: Precisely so.

Primary Education Conference.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if there is a Regulation of the National Board of Education requiring the two chief inspectors of national schools to hold conferences to discuss questions relating to primary education with the inspectors, some thirty in number, subordinate to each chief inspector; and, if so, whether this Regulation has been frequently disregarded in recent years; and if he will ascertain what action the Commissioners of Education have taken or propose to take.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that their instructions require that the chief inspectors shall hold at least one conference in the year with the inspectors of each circuit, and that these instructions are strictly followed.

Clanricarde Estate Evicted Tenants.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of applications from evicted tenants upon the Clanricarde Estate for reinstatement in their holdings, and how many have been reinstated up to date.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that so far as they are aware no change has taken place in this matter since I answered the hon. Member's similar Question on 20th May last.

Completion of Land Purchase Agreements.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether landlords who have come to agreements to purchase with their tenants have been paid promptly the purchase price as soon as the examiners of title have got through their duties and the work of inspection has been completed; and whether any landlord has been kept out of the money agreed to be paid for his land by reason of the fact that the Estates Commissioners were short of funds.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative, and the Answer to the second part is in the negative.

Rathmullan Evicted Farmer.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the claim of Joseph Gallagher to the farm on the estate of C. F. Stewart, situate at Ray, Rathmullan, North Donegal, from which his brother Patrick Gallagher was evicted over twenty years ago; whether he is aware that the estate was recently bought by the Estates Commissioners to be resold to the tenants; and, seeing that the farm is in the occupation of one Bryan Meehan, who does not reside on it, as a grazing ranch, whether he will direct the Estates Commissioners to reinstate Joseph Gallagher in the farm, which he held jointly with his brother, or in one of equal value, or award adequate compensation.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received from Joseph Gallagher an application for reinstatement. The estate in question has not been purchased by the Commissioners, but proceedings have recently been instituted before them for direct sale by the owner to the tenants. The Commissioners will consider Gallagher's application when the estate reaches its turn to be dealt with, but this cannot be for a considerable time to come.

Innishowen Labourers' Cottages.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the refusal of the Estates Commissioners to pay the half or any portion of the compensation paid to them for land acquired from the occupying tenants for labourers' cottages in the Innishowen rural district, North Donegal; and, if so, whether he will take steps to have the tenants' annual instalments reduced in proportion to the land taken and the proper portion of the compensation granted paid to them.

MR. BIRRELL: The Land Commission are unable to identify the particular cases referred to in the Question, as the particulars of the arbitrator's award have not been notified to the Commissioners, and they have not received the compensation money. Upon the subject generally the Commissioners inform me that there are two kinds of cases to be dealt with. First, the case of direct sales in which purchase agreements have been lodged, but the advances have not yet been made. In these cases, when portions of the holdings are acquired under the Labourers Acts, the Commissioners require that the purchase agreements should be amended by excluding the plots so acquired and reducing the purchase money as the landlord and tenants may agree. The compensation money in such cases is payable to the owner and tenant and not to the Commissioners. The second class of case is that in which the lands are already charged with an annuity under the Land Purchase Acts. The annuity is a paramount charge upon the lands, and when any part of such lands is acquired under the Labourers Acts, the proper proportion of the annuity must be redeemed if the local authority is to acquire the land free from encumbrance. When the plot taken is small as compared with the entire holding, or when the annuity has been paid for a considerable number of years, the Commissioners hold that a proportionately smaller part of the compensation may be applied in part redemption of the annuity. But when the plot taken represents the whole or the greater portion of the holding, it is essential that the whole or greater part of the annuity should be redeemed out of the compensation money, if the rates of the county are not to suffer. All compensation moneys received by the Commissioners are applied in full in the redemption *pro tanto* of the outstanding advances under the Land Acts, and the tenant-purchasers' annuities are reduced accordingly.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) asked on what basis—when only a small portion of a farm was taken compulsorily by the local authority—the calculation for compensation was based.

MR. BIRRELL: Each case has to be considered on its merits. When a small portion of land is taken to provide for labourers' cottages the compensation awarded has, in the first instance, to be so applied as to redeem a *pro tanto* amount of the purchase annuity, otherwise there would be no proper security left for the ratepayers. It is a rather difficult job to make the calculation.

Irish Loan Stock.

MR. DUNN (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that in the issue of the Guaranteed £2 15s. Irish Loan Stock no application for less than £2,000 stock has received allotment, thus absolutely ignoring the small investor; whether this practice is to be pursued in the future; and, if so, whether an official intimation to the effect that no small investors need apply will be made to the public.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The method of allotment was settled after the applications had been received. In view of the very large number of applications for small amounts, it was found to be impossible to apply any method of *pro rata* allotment to all the applicants. It is not the practice to make an allotment of a less amount than £100 stock, and, in order to observe this rule and at the same time to ensure as nearly as possible a *pro rata* allotment, it was found necessary to exclude all applications under £2,000. Such a course is only resorted to when the number of applications for small amounts renders it necessary, so that it would be impossible as well as inexpedient to give notice beforehand of the maner in which applications can be dealt with.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Therefore, the whole benefit of this loan falls into the maws of the Stock Exchange sharks.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that advantage has been taken of the supposed preference given to small investors to enable the sharks referred to by the hon. Member for South Donegal to obtain large allotments by filling up an enormous number of small applications?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I quite agree. The question is not so simple as it appears. In the past advantage has undoubtedly been taken of the preference given to small investors.

MR. FLYNN: Has not a distinguished ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that this stock should have been issued at £1 higher in favour of Ireland? Can the right hon. Gentleman say why that was not done?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I have explained the circumstances over and over again.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of allowing preferential allotment to small applicants who pay in full on application?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am not sure that would be a sufficient guarantee, and I am perfectly certain it would be a very great mistake for me to say so beforehand.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the number of applicants for £250 stock, or less, of the recent issue of Irish Land Stock; how many of these were granted allotments and how many were refused; and whether in future issues he will provide some means of giving allotments to applicants for small sums on some condition that they will hold the stock for a certain time whereby their *bona fides* as investors will be proved.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Applications could only be made in multiples of £100. The applications for £100 and £200 numbered 14,412. It was impossible, in view of the number of the applications, to make an allotment in any of these cases. The object of my hon. friend's suggestion is one that has my full sympathy, and I shall be prepared to consider any method that can be suggested for attaining it, but the difficulties appear to be considerable.

Irish Expenditure.

SIR F. BANBURY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is estimated to be the total expenditure out of the Exchequer, or out of taxes raised by the authority of Parliament, upon purely Irish purposes in the year 1908–9.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The total expenditure on Irish services in 1908–9, as provided for in the Budget, is estimated at £8,172,000.

Ireland and the Income-Tax.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the proportion which the income-tax assessment on which taxes were contributed by Ireland bears to that of Great Britain for the years 1904–5, 1905–6, 1906–7, and 1907–8.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The respective amounts of income-tax contributed by Great Britain and Ireland must necessarily be a matter of speculation, but calculated on the basis of the estimate shown in the Return (House of Commons Paper No. 242 of 1907), "relating to Imperial Revenue (Collection and Expenditure) (Great Britain and Ireland) for the year ending 31st March, 1907," they would be as follows—

Year.	Great Britain.	Ireland.
	£.	£.
1904–5 - -	29,737,000	1,115,000
1905–6 - -	29,803,000	1,085,000
1906–7 - -	30,377,000	1,102,000
1907–8 - -	30,356,000	1,106,000

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Is it not the fact that the amount raised for each 1d. in the £ in Ireland is a decreasing quantity, while in England it is an increasing one?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: It looks like it.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): Can the figures for Great Britain be divided for England and Scotland?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE asked for notice.

Transfer of Coastguards to the Customs.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if it is the intention of the Government to grant facilities to discuss the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee that has inquired into the proposed transfer of the Coastguard to the Customs; and, if so, when.

MR. ASQUITH: I regret that it will not be possible to find an opportunity for discussing the recommendations of this Committee.

Foreign Office Vote.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Prime Minister on what date the promise given to the hon. Member for the Ripon division on 4th June that the Foreign Office Vote would be put down for discussion in the ordinary course this session will be fulfilled.

MR. ASQUITH: I hope that a portion of Monday, the 27th, may be set aside for the Foreign Office Vote.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): Is the Prime Minister in a position to state what the business will be for next week?

MR. ASQUITH said that if the Procedure Resolution with regard to the Licensing Bill were carried the next day, Monday and Tuesday would be given to the first clause of the Licensing Bill in Committee. On Wednesday the Indian Budget would be taken, and on Thursday and Friday the Report stage of the Irish Universities Bill. On Saturday the Third Reading of the Finance Bill and the Irish Universities Bill would be taken.

COLONEL WILLIAMS (Dorset, W.): Will there be any opportunity of discussing the Report of the Public Accounts Committee?

MR. ASQUITH: I quite recognise the importance of the Report being discussed, but I cannot hold out any hope of time being found for it this year.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) pointed out that only two days had been occupied in Committee on the Finance Bill. There was no Report stage, and he asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would not give the House a more satisfactory opportunity of discussing the Third Reading. This was one of the most important measures of the session and it was, he thought, the universal practice to put the Bill down as the first order on an ordinary day.

Mr. ASQUITH: I do not remember any session in recent years in which the financial arrangements of the Government have been more largely discussed.

Sir F. BANBURY: In the event of the Third Reading of the Finance Bill and the Report stage of the Irish Universities Bill being obtained before Saturday, the House will not sit on that day?

Mr. ASQUITH: That is so.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe) was understood to ask when the Board of Education Vote would be taken.

Mr. ASQUITH: I cannot make any statement as to that.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [Lords].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 325.]

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Post Office Sites Bill [Lords] with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton*).

NEW BILL.

NATIONALISATION OF CANALS AND RAILWAYS BILL.

"To provide for the Nationalisation of Canals and Railways," presented by Mr. William Thorne; supported by Mr. Steadman, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Gill, Mr. Bell, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. James Haslam, and Mr. Wilkie; to be read a second time upon Monday, 27th July, and to be printed.

SUPPLY [17th Allotted Day.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £11,821,531 be granted to His Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Post Office, including Telegraphs and Telephones.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): It is customary for the Postmaster-General on this Vote to make a general statement as to the position of the Post Office for the past year, as the expenditure and revenue of the Post Office has now become a very considerable item in our national expenditure. The revenue last year was £22,500,000 and the expenditure was £18,750,000, the surplus being rather over £3,750,000. The estimate of revenue for the present year was £23,000,000 and of expenditure £19,500,000, which gives a surplus of about £3,750,000 again. While the revenue of the Post Office up to a short time ago was fairly elastic, it has now, like other portions of the revenue, shown some falling off, and something in the nature of a stimulus or fillip seems to be required in order to increase the postal revenue. That can be secured in one or two ways. One would be a general election, which would be a very profitable thing for the Post Office; but short of that, public excitement on any particular question is an advantage. Therefore, without expressing any view with regard to woman suffrage or the Licensing Bill, I would say to those who are advocating or opposing those measures: "Agitate agitate, so long as you do it in the proper channel—that is, continue your agitation by means of the penny post." Either the suffragists or the opponents of the Licensing Bill, if they carry out the policy which I suggest to them, will enjoy the double advantage of reflecting that they are doing something to bring to an end this iniquitous Government, and at the same time to assist the revenue of the country. But there is another form in which the public may contribute to the postal revenue. We have had from time to time various postal crazes. There have been valentines, Christmas cards, and latterly picture post-cards. Last year I pointed out that the picture post-card craze was falling off, and I suggested that the public should direct their superfluous energy and cash into some new form of postal revenue. They responded to my appeal and devoted themselves to Limericks. I find that Limericks bring in postal revenue in this way. The figures are very remarkable. Those who go in for Limericks are told they will get a cottage and a cart—at least, so I am informed, for I have never been in for a Limerick—and they buy sixpenny postal orders. The postal orders themselves are not particularly profitable, but I am glad to say that a considerable amount of correspondence is also involved. The public in the last six months of the past year would have bought in the ordinary way between 700,000 or 800,000 sixpenny postal orders. They actually bought no less than 11,400,000, or fourteen times as many. I am sorry to say that that particular craze has now disappeared. Of course, I am speaking only from the postal point of view, because I have been accused of encouraging gambling and lotteries by the sale of sixpenny orders. But I have no option. If people want to buy my sixpenny orders, I have got to sell them. I have been considering the matter, and I have been thinking, for the coming year, of offering a very substantial prize, if the Treasury will allow me, for some public craze which will at the same time be both profitable and innocent—a sort of craze which will pass the scrutiny of the Anti-Gambling League and the Manchester Watch Committee. So far with regard to revenue. I would like to say that as regards expenditure the matter is not so satisfactory, because, while the revenue has been fairly elastic during the last two and a half years, and has been increasing by from £1,000,000 to £2,000,000 a year, the expenditure has unfortunately risen to a larger amount. This is due to the ordinary automatic increase arising from the increased amount of matter which goes through the Post Office. I know that many postal reformers, including the hon. Member for Canterbury, argue on the seductive fallacy that you can carry any amount of additional postal matter without adding to the postal staff. That is, of course, a pure fallacy. Buildings are increasing, and as we anticipate taking over the telephone system in a few years, that will add to expenditure as our own telephone system has already done; and in addition to the ordinary increase in the rates of pay of the staff, in the last two or three years expenditure has been increased to meet recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee very materially, and the ultimate result will be no less than £1,000,000 a year. But that is an addition which no hon. Member will grudge. So that if we look back for some years we find that the surplus balance available for the Exchequer has not materially increased. The principal, in fact the only profitable, head of revenue we have now left in the postal system is the penny stamp. That is really the sheet-anchor of our postal revenue, and I am glad to say that the sales of penny stamps continue to increase. Even here we find that the telephone system, which is cutting materially into our telegraph system, is doing something to diminish the number of letters. I do not think I need dwell on the disastrous history of our telegraph system. It was over-capitalised to start with; then came the reduction to sixpenny telegrams, and now it is carried on at a very great annual loss to the Exchequer. The only remedy suggested is the introduction of threepenny telegrams; but the result of that would be only to double the loss. I am glad to think that the telephone branch is in a somewhat different position. As far as we are concerned, and I feel certain that it will be so as far as our successors are concerned—we are determined, looking to the experience of the telegraph system, that the telephone system shall remain on a paying basis. It is quite clear that it ought to be on a business basis. Various proposals have been made for modifying rates. The matter is still under discussion with various chambers of commerce. I am very glad that the Post Office, in this asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would not give the House a more satisfactory opportunity of discussing the Third Reading. This was one of the most important measures of the session and it was, he thought, the universal practice to put the Bill down as the first order on an ordinary day.

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The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): It is customary for the Postmaster-General on this Vote to make a general statement as to the position of the Post Office for the past year, as the expenditure and revenue of the Post Office has now become a very considerable item in our national expenditure. The revenue last year was £22,500,000 and the expenditure was £18,750,000, the surplus being rather over £3,750,000. The estimate of revenue for the present year was £23,000,000 and of expenditure £19,500,000, which gives a surplus of about £3,750,000 again. While the revenue of the Post Office up to a short time ago was fairly elastic, it has now, like other portions of the revenue, shown some falling off, and something in the nature of a stimulus or fillip seems to be required in order to increase the postal revenue. That can be secured in one or two ways. One would be a general election, which would be a very profitable thing for the Post Office; but short of that, public excitement on any particular question is an advantage. Therefore, without expressing any view with regard to woman suffrage or the Licensing Bill, I would say to those who are advocating or opposing those measures: "Agitate agitate, so long as you do it in the proper channel—that is, continue your agitation by means of the penny post." Either the suffragists or the opponents of the Licensing Bill, if they carry out the policy which I suggest to them, will enjoy the double advantage of reflecting that they are doing something to bring to an end this iniquitous Government, and at the same time to assist the revenue of the country. But there is another form in which the public may contribute to the postal revenue. We have had from time to time various postal crazes. There have been valentines, Christmas cards, and latterly picture post-cards. Last year I pointed out that the picture post-card craze was falling off, and I suggested that the public should direct their superfluous energy and cash into some new form of postal revenue. They responded to my appeal and devoted themselves to Limericks. I find that Limericks bring in postal revenue in this way. The figures are very remarkable. Those who go in for Limericks are told they will get a cottage and a cart—at least, so I am informed, for I have never been in for a Limerick—and they buy sixpenny postal orders. The postal orders themselves are not particularly profitable, but I am glad to say that a considerable amount of correspondence is also involved. The public in the last six months of the past year would have bought in the ordinary way between 700,000 or 800,000 sixpenny postal orders. They actually bought no less than 11,400,000, or fourteen times as many. I am sorry to say that that particular craze has now disappeared. Of course, I am speaking only from the postal point of view, because I have been accused of encouraging gambling and lotteries by the sale of sixpenny orders. But I have no option. If people want to buy my sixpenny orders, I have got to sell them. I have been considering the matter, and I have been thinking, for the coming year, of offering a very substantial prize, if the Treasury will allow me, for some public craze which will at the same time be both profitable and innocent—a sort of craze which will pass the scrutiny of the Anti-Gambling League and the Manchester Watch Committee. So far with regard to revenue. I would like to say that as regards expenditure the matter is not so satisfactory, because, while the revenue has been fairly elastic during the last two and a half years, and has been increasing by from £1,000,000 to £2,000,000 a year, the expenditure has unfortunately risen to a larger amount. This is due to the ordinary automatic increase arising from the increased amount of matter which goes through the Post Office. I know that many postal reformers, including the hon. Member for Canterbury, argue on the seductive fallacy that you can carry any amount of additional postal matter without adding to the postal staff. That is, of course, a pure fallacy. Buildings are increasing, and as we anticipate taking over the telephone system in a few years, that will add to expenditure as our own telephone system has already done; and in addition to the ordinary increase in the rates of pay of the staff, in the last two or three years expenditure has been increased to meet recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee very materially, and the ultimate result will be no less than £1,000,000 a year. But that is an addition which no hon. Member will grudge. So that if we look back for some years we find that the surplus balance available for the Exchequer has not materially increased. The principal, in fact the only profitable, head of revenue we have now left in the postal system is the penny stamp. That is really the sheet-anchor of our postal revenue, and I am glad to say that the sales of penny stamps continue to increase. Even here we find that the telephone system, which is cutting materially into our telegraph system, is doing something to diminish the number of letters. I do not think I need dwell on the disastrous history of our telegraph system. It was over-capitalised to start with; then came the reduction to sixpenny telegrams, and now it is carried on at a very great annual loss to the Exchequer. The only remedy suggested is the introduction of threepenny telegrams; but the result of that would be only to double the loss. I am glad to think that the telephone branch is in a somewhat different position. As far as we are concerned, and I feel certain that it will be so as far as our successors are concerned—we are determined, looking to the experience of the telegraph system, that the telephone system shall remain on a paying basis. It is quite clear that it ought to be on a business basis. Various proposals have been made for modifying rates. The matter is still under discussion with various chambers of commerce. I am very glad that the Post Office, in this respect and in many other respects, of late has got into more intimate touch with the chambers of commerce and others who are interested in these matters, so that they can be discussed from the point of view of the public. I need not go into the merits of that question. From time to time complaints are made to me that the telephone system is not always quite as effective as it ought to be, and that sometimes more calls are charged for than have been made. I need hardly say that the complaints made as regards the Post Office system are necessarily much less than those made against the National Telephone system, because the Post Office system is much the better system of the two. I should like to point out to those who make complaints of overcharges that, as a matter of fact, they cannot be overcharged. Our experience is, so far as the automatic check is concerned, that if there is a balance of incorrect calls it is rather in favour of the customer than of the office. The impression that there have been overcharges is, I think, greatly due to the fact that people are not always aware how much their telephones are used. An amusing case occurred recently. We received a violent expostulation. We examined into the case and convinced our customer that he had been properly charged. I have from him a letter with an order for the final balance, in which he says: "The mystery has now been solved which puzzled me. On inquiry I find the housemaid has been using my telephone without my authority to communicate with her young man." I hope, therefore, that before accusing us of endeavouring to obtain money by false pretences people will inquire into the operations of their own households. One word as to underground telegraph work in the country. That is making steady progress. We have spent about £1,250,000 on it—about £230,000 this year—and it is gradually spreading throughout the country. Some hon. Members were very anxious that the underground telegraph should be at once extended to their particular town. But the question of underground telegraphs is not merely a local one. Every mile made of the underground telegraph, which saves the wires from storms, especially where added in connection with submarine telegraphs, is equally advantageous to any particular town, whether it is added close to it or nearer to a submarine cable. Therefore it is not merely a question of a particular expenditure in a particular locality, but of the best system under which it can be expended. As regards overhead telegraphs, the House gave me the Third Reading of a Bill which will assist me very materially in obtaining wayleaves from obstructive individuals, some of whom might be designated as real blackmailers of the postal service. As regards the question of wireless telegraphy, the Convention of last year has now been ratified by ourselves for all our Colonies, with, I think, the exception of Newfoundland, which is peculiarly situated, and the Orange River Colony, which has no seaboard, and has been ratified, I think, by all the Great Powers with the exception of the United States. The United States, I have no doubt, will ratify the Convention later; we know that in principle they are in favour of the Convention. I am glad to say that the relations between the Post Office and the great Marconi Company, which until lately were of a somewhat unfriendly character, are now of the most friendly kind, and that they have accepted and adopted the principle of the Convention—the principle of inter-communication. I am sure they are wise in doing so; the result will be largely to extend their operations. I should like to say, looking to the telegraph system and telephone systems in the past, and our experience in the matter of buying them out, that we do not desire in regard to wireless telegraphy to put ourselves in the same position. We are not going to allow any monopoly in regard to that particular system. Last year we started two experimental stations. We are now working commercial stations which will enable us at any moment, if we desire to do so, for postal purposes, to extend our operations without having to buy up companies and monopolies. I think the House will feel that that is the position which a Government Department ought to take.

I will now turn to the postal reforms which have been carried out since I have had the honour of being Postmaster-General. We receive a large number of suggestions for postal reforms. It is easy to make suggestions, but those who make them are neither daunted by the question of cost nor hampered by difficulties of administration. You have to look at this matter from two points of view. It is absolutely essential, in a great administrative department like the Post Office catering for the convenience of the public, to consider whether any suggested reform is of a simple nature and whether it will interfere with the speed and accuracy of the delivery of letters and other postal matter. A departure from simplicity and uniformity which from one point of view may be advantageous, may break down when considered from the point of view of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It is very easy to say you ought to have a 1d. this and a 1d. that, if you have not to provide the money, and if you underestimate the cost, as I find all postal reformers do. The cost cannot be disregarded. Moreover, the Postmaster-General is not his own master; he has the Treasury behind him, and he has either to cajole or persuade the Treasury if he wants money for postal reforms. In spite of this I have met during my two and a half years of office with great consideration and generosity from the Treasury. One has to look at this from two points of view—those of the taxpayer and the consumer. I contend, and have always contended, to the Treasury that, if the Post Office provides a certain amount of balance for the Exchequer, the consumer of postal matter ought also to be considered by the adoption of postal reforms from time to time for his benefit. I am glad to think that in one way and another I have obtained, during the two years and a half, what will amount, when these postal operations are in full swing, to about £500,000 for postal reforms—home, colonial, and foreign. I have already mentioned the home reforms. They are concerned with postal orders, the lowering of the higher charges of the parcel post, improving the operations of the ½d. post, and the extension of reforms in regard to deliveries to the rural parts of the country. One reform which I was very glad to carry through was a material reduction in the postage of literature for the blind, so as to bring them as far as possible into the same relation to postal charges as their more fortunate comrades who are able to see. As regards the question of lotteries, we do our best to check them in every possible way. It is not very easy, because the bulk of these papers are sent in sealed envelopes, and in the present state—I am not sure of public opinion, but certainly of public law—I have no authority to stop sealed envelopes properly addressed and posted. A Joint Committee of both Houses is sitting on this question, and we are venturing to make certain suggestions to them. I hope the result of that Committee will be that we shall be allowed rather more power in dealing with this matter, where it is quite clear that lotteries alone are affected. As regards Colonial postage, we have since last October raised the limit of weight for letters for the Colonies from half an ounce to an ounce. I have started an experimental system of cash on delivery with some of the Colonies. With regard to this country, there is a great deal of feeling in regard to that matter. This is on a totally different plan. This cannot injure any British traders. It will, I think, be greatly to their advantage, and the question does not arise as between the big trader and the little trader. As regards the internal question of cash on delivery, I do not propose to consider it, at all events under present conditions. The Committee is aware that I introduced a very considerable reduction in the magazine post to Canada. I am glad to think that has been a very great success from two points of view. The amount of matter carried has increased by leaps and bounds. An addition of something like six millions of British periodicals annually go now to the Canadian consumer, and they are of a better class and description. As regards the foreign post, we have improved the money order system, we have extended the parcels post, especially to America, we have improved the foreign telegraph service, and I hope in a short time to be able to reduce the telephone charges to France. The limit of weight of foreign postage has been raised from half an ounce to an ounce. Even though we are not able within a limited time to carry out penny postage to France, the improvements I have referred to will be very advantageous to those who send letters abroad. I have already announced to the House the introduction, as from 1st October next, of penny postage to the United States of America. I was glad to find it received with general satisfaction that, in the future, there should be the same rate of postage to all English-speaking nations. I found that the American Postmaster-General was favourable to the scheme, I made certain representations to him, which he received in a friendly way, and which, after some consideration, he was able to adopt, and thus practically to carry out in regard to America what we have now in the case of British Colonies—namely, 1d. per ounce throughout the scale of the postal system. Taking the two reforms together, after 1st October, the charge for a letter will be only 1d. instead of 2½d. A letter one ounce in weight, which formerly cost 5d., will now cost 1d., and a letter two ounces in weight, which formerly would have been charged 10d. to America, will after October only be charged 2d. I think I may claim also that this reform is not the result of popular clamour or popular pressure, for it came rather as a surprise to the House and the country. I desire to recognise to the full the labours of those who have advocated this claim in the past, of men like my hon. friend the Member for Canterbury and Lord Blyth, Mr. Stead, and others, and I am exceedingly glad that it has fallen to me to be able to seize the psychological moment and to carry through with general approval this great postal reform. I have spoken so far of the Post Office as face to face with the public, but the Postmaster-General is also, of course, a great employer of labour, the greatest in the country. I desire to reaffirm what I said before I became Postmaster-General, that the Postmaster-General ought in that capacity to be a good employer of labour and to set an example to others. The Postmaster-General is in a sense a three-fold employer. He has to employ the postal servants, he has to deal with factories, in which he competes with the outside market, and also he has to deal with great contractors. As far as the factories are concerned, we desire as far as possible to maintain uniformity of work so as not to have at one time to take on a large number of men and at another time to part with them. We desire as far as we can to keep our work uniform, and have as few discharges as possible at any time of the year. Last Christmas we employed a considerable number of extra men, and I was able to raise the wages for this casual employment from 20s. to 24s. It will be a satisfaction to the Committee to know that this was not only a great advantage to the men themselves, but a very good investment of public money, because I was assured by the Comptroller that the men came with better heart, and, being able to spend more on food, they got into better fettle, and the money came back to us with interest. As regards the contractors, I have appointed an inspector who has personal knowledge of the contractors, and through whom we are able to decide beforehand rather than after. Thus we are able to discriminate between contractors, and know which are bad ones. We apply the fair wages clause to the various contracts, and I am endeavouring to deal with the question of sweating. I come to the question of the Post Office servants themselves. I do not propose to enter in any detail into the Report and recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee. While the Report may have failed to give full satisfaction to those concerned, Members of the House are grateful to the Committee for the very great care and trouble and time which were devoted by them to a very difficult question. I would ask also the sympathy of the Committee towards myself in endeavouring to carry out the recommendations of the Committee, because I can assure them it has been a difficult and delicate task. The only point on which I need trouble the House at the present moment is in regard to classification. The recommendation of the Committee was that there should be a uniform classification for sorting clerks and postmen, and that the classification should depend on the element in the first place of units of work, and in the next should be modified by the cost of living. Looking into the matter and trying to work it out, I found that to adopt this recommendation to the full would be a great hardship on the outdoor postmen. With the assent of the Treasury, which acted very liberally, I was able so to classify the various towns of the country, that while there would be reductions in a small number of cases, in the large majority of cases there would be an increase. A circular has been issued to Members in the form of a letter in regard to this matter. Any Member not knowing anything about the subject would think from the letter that where the scale was reduced it applied to existin postmen. It does nothing of the sort. No existing Post Office servant will lose either his scale or pay. Every existing servant will go to his old maximum and, so far from making any alteration, the scheme will only apply to new entrants, and in no case to existing servants. It is rather a pity that the circular letter has been worded in such a way as to give the impression that I was going to reduce the wages of existing men. The other point dealt with was that it was very unfair to put down a town without inquiry into the cost of living, and that was given as the view of the Committee. Will the Committee believe that I have put up 464 offices without waiting for the complete inquiry into the cost of living? I think it rather hard that a case should be made against me in this matter when I have dealt with it broadly and easily, and generally to the advantage of the vast majority of offices. It is a pity when circulars are sent to Members of Parliament that the facts of the case should not be fairly and properly stated. When the matter is such a question of classification as this, when you have to deal with something like 5,000 offices, it is obvious there must be certain anomalies, and I am quite open to argument in regard to any case brought before me as to a particular office being unfairly treated. Of course, where the unit of work or conditions of living are shown not to be correct, they are subject to revision from time to time. I say one word upon two other points. One is the question of the technical test for telegraphists. When the Supplementary Estimates were being discussed some hon. Members opposite charged me with having put up the technical test too high. The test I laid down was passed, and passed with ease, by a very large majority of the telegraphists who went in for the electrical teaching. One portion of the test I thought was too high, and that I have reduced to proper proportions. Roughly speaking, some 550 telegraphists have passed the test, and only nineteen have failed to pass it. So I do not think it could be said I put the test too high. The other question is as to the female typists. I cordially agree they were formerly underpaid. In this general revision of salaries we have raised the female typists from 25s. to 28s. a week, and, in addition to that, if they can show a proficiency in shorthand writing they will get an additional 3s. a week. Speaking generally, I would point out that the scales of pay are improved in nearly every case, and in one way or another the conditions of service in the Post Office have been improved. The House of Commons has voted a very large sum of money for the promotion of these improvements, and when a Parliamentary Committee sits upon a matter of this kind and make recommendations I think their recommendations ought to be carried out to the full. With regard to the general relations of the postal service, one of the very first things I did on coming into office was to recognise the representative character of the great postal associations, and I have never regretted that action from that day to this. I have been converted to the advantage of this because it has brought into closer personal relations than existed before the staff and those who have to represent this great department. I am one of those who believe that if you want to administer a great Department properly the more you have personal relations between the various grades and sections the more likely you are to have smooth working of the Department. I have dealt with 40,000,000 of the public and with some 200,000 postal servants, and now I have to deal with 670 Members of this House, who have postal servants amongst their constituents. Members are constantly approaching me with matters upon which they do not press me, but which they believe I will look into and do what I can with. Of course, I am naturally not always able to meet them in these matters; there is generally the question of cost, and very often the question of administration, and they frequently take some time to consider. Hon. Members must remember that the consideration by the Department of questions of postal facilities is very much like a child's puzzle, and that, while a certain proposal may be to the advantage of a particular district, when once you begin taking the pieces of the puzzle out, you may not get your puzzle together again. Hon. Members may rest assured that we do our best to meet them. In conclusion, let me say that only those who have been in such a vast office as the Post Office can appreciate the enormous extent and the size of the wonderful organisation. I am very proud, indeed, to have been its head for two and-a-half years, and after my experience and observation, I wish to put upon record that this great public Department is a credit to the State and a striking testimony to the loyalty and efficiency of a very zealous body of public servants.

*DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford) said he was delighted to know that the Postmaster-General was safeguarding the public interests, especially in regard to wireless telegraphy. All the postal reforms which the right hon. Gentleman had accomplished were in the interest of the public at home and abroad. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his success on having achieved a penny postal service with America, and trusted that the next thing that he would do in this direction, would be the initiation of a penny postal service with France. As an employer of labour, the Post Office endeavoured to do its work thoroughly, and to set an example for other employers to copy. He had listened with pleasure to the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the postal wages throughout the country, and was rejoiced to find that the statements in the circular which hon. Members had received were not correct, and that the reductions applied to new servants only, and not to those who were at present engaged. They all felt that, so far as their personal relationship was concerned, the right hon. Gentleman had been most courteous and kind. With regard to classification it seemed to have been settled mostly in relation to the units of work, and that the right hon. Gentleman had been guided by the units of work, rather than by the cost of living. But the cost of living, he thought, should have been the guide of the right hon. Gentleman in the question of classification. They regard this particular recommendation of the Hobhouse Committee as a retrograde recommendation, and he hoped the Postmaster-General would not approve of it, but would approach the question of classification more from the point of view of the cost of living, which was a wiser and truer test than the units of work. There were some facts which he would put before the Committee with regard to the wages which in the opinion of the postmen were not satisfactory at the present time. The wages paid in Chiswick, which was in the London area, were 33s. a week, but if the right hon. Gentleman walked from Chiswick to Brentford, a distance so small that he would not know when he left Chiswick and entered Brentford, he would find on inquiry from the postmen there that the wages were 25s. a week. The point he wished to emphasise was that the cost of living and the conditions of work were the same in Brentford as in Chiswick, and that the postmen in Brentford felt aggrieved because they could not live and do their work under the same conditions as their fellows in the service in Chiswick. Other classes of public servants and workmen in these districts were treated in the same way with regard to scale of wages, the police in Chiswick and Brentford receiving 35s. a week. The appeal he now put forward was a simple and proper appeal. It was that the Postmaster-General should be as good an employer of labour as the London County Council, the police authorities, and other employers of labour in the district. In Southall, a district near at hand, the postmen received 24s. a week. They had lately had a rise of 1s., and were grateful for it, but they were still entitled to more consideration, because at Hanwell, which was within a stone's throw of Southall, the postmen received 33s. a week. The cost of living in both places was practically the same. He had no wish to worry the right hon. Gentleman, but merely to ask him to consider the question, and to see that in the future the cost of living should be his guide. He also asked the right hon. Gentleman to extend the London postal area, so as to include all points within twelve miles of Charing Cross. He also trusted the right hon. Gentleman would consider the question of the postmen throughout the country, and would deal with them as justly and as liberally and as wisely as he had dealt with the other officials. They did not wish to feel there was any stigma of sweating attached to this great office, but the feeling existed up to the present time, and they wished the very suspicion of it to be removed. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon the reforms he had introduced, and he was glad that he had recognised the rights of the employees to combination, which was a reversal of the policy pursued by the late Postmaster-General. But there were several grievances to be redressed, and he trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would not be daunted by the Hobhouse Committee, but would exercise his independent judgment. He begged to move, simply in order to call attention to the matter, a reduction of the Postmaster-General's salary by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Chief Offices) be reduced by £100."—(*Dr. Rutherford.*)

*MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince) said he had listened to the greater portion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech with a very great degree of satisfaction. During the earlier portion of the speech he was sorry to say that he had been detained in Committee upstairs, and had therefore been unable to listen to the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, but he took it broadly that there was a great deal of matter for satisfaction in the presentment which he had made to the House. Among those matters for satisfaction he thought really nothing could be received in a better spirit by the House or by the nation than the increasing efficiency and increasing cheapness of communication between the English-speaking publics. He was quite sure that most peace-loving men as well as most warlike men would agree that the happiness of the world itself depended very largely upon the cordial relations which were maintained between the English-speaking publics. He thought there was nothing in which a great State Department like that over which the right hon. Gentleman presided could be more sincerely congratulated than the tremendous success which had attended not only the Postmaster-General's efforts, but also the efforts of others, in bringing about those cordial relations. He thought they ought also to congratulate the hon. Gentleman the Member for Canterbury on his great attention to these matters, and on his efforts, so persistent and at last so successful. When the right hon. Gentleman mentioned the million of magazines which were taken by Canada alone, magazines of the better class, that fact alone must indeed be looked upon as a very great tribute to the intellectual capacity of the Canadian people, as well as to our power of supplying them with such magazines, to meet their literary needs. One could not shut one's eyes to the fact that the carriage of these magazines must entail an enormous amount of work on postal servants who had charge of that supply. The right hon. Gentleman had very rightly stated that he was in charge of a great State Department, the servants of which did their work in such a manner that he thought history had no higher record than that of the splendidly efficient way in which those duties were performed. While all acknowledged—he himself had always recognised it, if they would allow him to say so—not merely the painstaking, but the very zealous manner in which the Postmaster-General had attended to the duties of his office, yet he thought nevertheless that the right hon. Gentleman had paid hardly sufficient attention to the intense feeling that had been occasioned by the action which had been taken in connection with his Department. Of course, it was perfectly true, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, that no present servant or no servant before the circular was issued would in any way be in a worse position as a consequence of the action of the Department. That was a matter which they might themselves view with comparative satisfaction; but they had to remember that this Department, as a whole, would, he hoped, continue for thousands of years—[laughter]—well, until the New Zealander gazed upon ruined London Bridge. The present officers must pass away and new officers appear, and they could not but view with serious apprehension that the new entrants would start on a scale which, in at least 250 offices, would be seriously reduced compared with the present scale. That was not a matter which the House ought to view with any satisfaction at all. He thought it was admitted that a very good employer of labour, when he came seriously to consider the matter, agreed that to reduce the wages of the labourer was both socially and economically unwise. It brought to the employer himself little benefit, and it often enough left the workman very poor indeed. There was a lack of efficiency, a lack of that standard of home life, and of that reasonable comfort which made for efficiency in the workman, and where wages were reduced it cut down the quality of the product, and the standard of living was gradually lowered. That had been found to be the case by the best employers and by many employers who, perhaps, might not be described as the best employers; but he thought employers generally admitted that to reduce the wages of the worker, lowered the standard of living, the efficiency of work, the quality of the product, and the condition of the employees. Under a competitive system, an employer in many cases was compelled to take action against his better judgment, and even against his will; but his industry had to be maintained, he found his costs mounting up very considerably, he found that the competition was increasing all around him, and he was compelled to reduce the wages of the workmen in order to keep his head above water. In that case, even though it might be economically and socially unwise, yet they might agree that the employer was the victim of circumstances over which he had little or no control. But certainly that argument and that point of view could not be urged in the case of the State Department when it took action that had the effect of lowering the *status* of, he should think, at least 250 offices, which employed, he should say, many thousands of hands. The competition which existed in the case of a private employer was wholly absent in the case of this great Department. The private employer found from year to year that he had little or no profit from his undertakings, but he hoped for better times; he might indeed, and did sometimes, make a definite loss upon his undertaking, or his gains might be so small as to be reduced to vanishing point. But here they had a State Department, possessed of a complete monopoly, unencumbered by any competition, making millions of pounds a year, and yet it was by this Department that the circular was issued declaring that new entrants should start on a lower minimum. That would apply to tens of thousands of men. [Cries of "No, no."] He was glad to see his hon. friend the Member for the City of London in his place.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): They need not come in if they do not like it.

*MR. WALSH said that was perfectly true. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that there were not tens of thousands, but the Department over which he presided, he had himself told them, employed about 200,000 people. If he only took a twentieth part of that number, who would be affected by the new regulation, it would be more than 10,000; but he would not boggle about the exact number at all. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman would see, if the figures were actually gone into, that tens of thousands of people under the new *status* would be adversely affected by the regulations which had already come into operation, or were about to come into operation.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the hon. Gentleman looks into it I think he will find that, while it is true that in future, in regard to some offices, a certain number of new entrants will be adversely affected, yet, though in the new classification some offices must go down, the vast majority will be benefited in the future as well as at present.

*MR. WALSH said he would not lay any special weight on the tens of thousands, and, if the right hon. gentleman was not satisfied, he would waive the number altogether. The point he wished to urge was that the proposal was not necessary. The right hon. Gentleman had alleged that in any classification some offices must go up and some must go down. He did not agree with the latter part of the proposition at all, because let it be remembered that the scale of wage at present in existence was fixed in 1890. That scale of wages was utterly inadequate to meet present day requirements. Everybody knew, it was perfectly well admitted, that not only had rents gone up in London and in the provinces by anything from 15 to 30 per cent., but the cost of living throughout the country as a whole had also very largely increased. [AN HON. MEMBER: Under a Radical Government?] Yes, under a Radical Government, but it had increased for sixteen or seventeen years under a Tory Government. This point, the mere cost of living, was one which it was necessary to urge. The right hon. Gentleman seemed devoted to the idea that, under the classification suggested by the Hobhouse Committee, while some offices might reap benefit, it was necessary for other offices to go down. Taking into consideration the fact that the wages and conditions of labour fixed eighteen years ago were inadequate, and that there had been a very large and serious increase in the cost of living, in the rents of houses, in the price of commodities which were necessary for the reasonable maintenance of people, it became matter for most serious apprehension that there should be such a large number of offices whose *status* was to be degraded. It was not a matter that the House could lightly pass over. A private employer who started new hands at a reduced wage nearly always found a trade union confronting him at the earliest possible moment, and had to subject himself to a good deal of negotiation. The men knew perfectly well that not only their interest but the interest of all other people in the district would be adversely affected if they allowed new entrants to lower the scale and standard of living and of wages. When the employer had to meet this organisation, many new points of view might be developed; but in this case there was no organisation that was effective from the trade union point of view. It was perfectly true that postal servants had unions, but they had not power to strike. They could not suspend their labour as a body. Indeed, he did not think the greatest madcap in the House would suggest that the servants of a great State Department should possess the right of suspending their labour and placing the whole national interest in a very serious state indeed. They could not suggest any such thing. But that made it all the more incumbent on the House to watch over very carefully and jealously safeguard the interest of these people, because, after all, the House was the final court of appeal before whom they could lay their claim. That really was the special reason why they had brought the matter forward. It was not a fact, however, that the regulation for reduced pay applied to new entrants alone. In the engineering and stores department the regulations had gone forth that those people who hitherto, he thought, had been described as the authorised maintenance men and the continuously employed men, would, instead of rising to a maximum of 42s. as they did in the past when they got in the established class, rise in the future to a maximum of only 38s. These men were actually in the service. They were not new entrants, and they were doing some of the most responsible work to which any skilled man could set his hand. They were passing, and many of them had passed, the very searching examination put forward by the Department, and these people who had given in many cases very long years of service to the Department and had passed the necessary examination, would, when they were placed in the established class, have 4s. less as a maximum than at present. Another point to which attention ought to be directed was the fact that some of that class of labour which might be called auxiliary rather than direct service—say that of painters and mechanics—was in future to be given out to contract. That was not a matter which ought to commend itself to the House. They really ought to employ their labour direct. That great State Department ought to see that its work was done under its own direct supervision. If there were any mistakes they ought to know the person to hang. The work ought not to be delegated to contractors, who, he would not say scamped the work, but did it not nearly so well as the Department itself would do it under its own direct supervision. Besides, the possibility of making the fair wages clause effective was rendered all the more difficult when the payment of the men and the conditions under which they were employed were placed in the hands of a third party altogether. The House found itself hampered time after time, and questions were constantly being showered upon Ministers from all quarters as to so-and so not receiving the wages to which he was entitled under the fair wages clause. That difficulty, which was already great, would be rendered very much greater if the work that the Department had directly performed in the past was handed over to contractors in the future. It was a very serious departure from the principles which he hoped animated both the great governing parties in the State. Again, there was the point that might be urged as to sick allowance and holidays being taken from certain classes of men engaged in what was known as the constructional work department. Large numbers of these men in the past had been encouraged to look forward to being placed on the established list, and indeed it had been held by the Bradford Committee that when these men had worked anything from three to five years on the laying and piecing-up of cables they became skilled workmen, and were entitled to be placed on the established list and to have the advantages to which establishment entitled them. He had a morbid horror of overstating a case, but the number of people who would be adversely affected, and deprived of the legitimate hope to which they were entitled, could certainly be numbered by hundreds, and he thought by thousands. Here, again, he thought the right hon. Gentleman might reconsider the whole matter, and keep the matter entirely in the hands of his own Department and not deprive them of that hope to which every honest workman was legitimately entitled, and which was the mainspring and motive of the best workmen in the country. He was quite sure the right hon. Gentleman did not look upon the new regulations as containing anything in the nature of finality. These matters had given rise to a very great deal of dissatisfaction in the minds of the men. These new regulations could not work, and in the interests of the State and of the men as a whole he certainly held it was desirable that the right hon. Gentleman should reconsider the matter. He did not want to put forward any special argument against classification. He knew it was a work of exceeding difficulty. He did not intend to complain of the Report of the Committee, because he knew perfectly well that that Committee did its work with exceeding zeal, and it was a work of tremendous complexity and magnitude. But he rather thought the Department had misinterpreted some of the recommendations of the Committee and carried them a great deal further than the members of the Committee ever thought would be the case. There were 250 offices at the very least which were degraded—where the new entrants would take a lower maximum—but there were some offices which it passed the wit of man to find out why they were being degraded. Take the case of Wigan. It was a murky, grimy, industrial town, very typical of many towns in Lancashire. After all, it was a very large town. It was a centre of population that he made bold to say was certainly not less than 200,000 within a radius of four miles. It was a receiving and a distributing centre, and had a very large number of offices. It had all the usual industries of a South-west Lancashire town—coal, iron, cotton, and many others. In that district it was a matter of notoriety that the cost of living had gone up enormously. According to the Board of Trade Returns the figure that Wigan stood at as to cost of living was ninety, the average of seventy-four large towns on which the classification was based being 100, and therefore the Department had acted upon the principle that the cost of living in Wigan was 10 per cent. lower than the index number. It was certainly 15 per cent. higher than it was ten years ago. Not only that, but cost of living was always largely determined by the rates of the town. Wigan was the fourth highest rated town in the whole country. How the Board of Trade could have arrived at the conclusion that the cost of living was 10 per cent. cheaper in Wigan than in the seventy-four towns mentioned in the list certainly passed his wit and would pass the wit of man. Here was a place with 93,000 population, within three or four miles radius an additional 120,000 population, bracketed with villages of as low as 3,000 population, although there was not one other postal town, with one exception (Walsall), that reached one-third the population of Wigan in the list. Only five years ago Wigan was practically made a first-class office, and to-day the new entrants would begin with a minimum of 1s. 6d. less and would reach the maximum of 3s. less than the existing employees. That which was a very serious case in Wigan was with certain modifications the case in many other towns. In Oldham, St. Helens, Warrington, Wolverhampton, and a large number of other towns including Clitheroe, this reduction in the case of new entrants would take place. An Irish Member once asked what had posterity done for them. Of course it did not follow that because posterity had done nothing for them they ought not to do anything for posterity. The House was always legislating for posterity. They took into consideration what were likely to be the conditions in the future, and they legislated for those conditions. Here were conditions that were certain to arise if the Department kept on these regulations. He had no right to trespass unduly upon the time of the House, but he was speaking at greater length than he should otherwise do because he considered this was a most serious matter. In 1893 the House unanimously passed a Resolution to the effect that when it employed labour it should pay fair wages, observe proper conditions of labour, and, so to speak, be a model employer of labour. But when they degraded labour and the *status* of labour, when they lowered the weekly wage, they were lowering the standard of living and lessening the amount of comfort that ought to go into the people's homes; they were also making it exceedingly difficult for others to rise to the standard which the House and other lovers of mankind wished the people to attain. They could not view light-heartedly the fact that all new entrants into the postal service, which was the greatest National department we possessed, should have their conditions of life very materially degraded. That was not a matter which the House ought to view with anything like ease or complacency. Good employers would find it difficult in future when they heard of this example to maintain the good conditions they were desirous of giving to their workpeople, and the bad employers would profit by such an example. They ought to proceed upon higher grounds. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that only a very small number were affected. He had taken the trouble to go through the actual figures of some of the offices, and he found that in Bermondsey, where there were seventeen offices, no less than 400 people would have their wages actually reduced by this new regulation. That was to say, that the new entrants would start upon a lower scale of pay. The number of people adversely affected by the new regulations would reach very many thousands. He did not intend to delay the Committee one moment more except to say that this was a matter which they could not view with a light heart. The House ought to stand to the Resolution to which he had referred, and which had been constantly reiterated, in regard to being a model employer of labour. The profits made by the Post Office enabled it to be a model employer. They believed that the great amount of work that would be done by the Post Office in future, owing to greater facilities for communications with the United States, Canada, France, and other places, would lay a burden of work upon the servants of this great State Department which certainly was a very strong argument against any reduction of their wages or working conditions. It was difficult enough already to hold any persons definitely responsible, but the difficulty would be intensely increased if much of the work now performed by the State was handed over to the contractor. Of course, they protested against that, and they asked that these men who had been in the State's employ and had been led to believe that by passing examinations, making themselves efficient, and by good conduct, they might get on to the establishment list, should not be deprived of hope, and should not have the standard of wages lowered to which they had been led to look forward. It was upon these grounds, and not because they had any animus against the Department—indeed, they would like to join in the well-merited appreciation which had been expressed in regard to the far-reaching reforms which the Postmaster-General had carried out—and not in any carping spirit that they protested. They recognised that the right hon. Gentleman was a good man struggling with adversity, and he had been surrounded by a great many conditions and demands to deal with which had required all his administrative skill. It was for those reasons that they asked him to give his careful attention to the points he had submitted to him.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) said he would like to preface his remarks by repeating what he said upon the last occasion when the Post Office Estimates were discussed, viz.: to express his gratitude for the courtesy which the right hon. Gentleman had always displayed towards those who desired to approach him upon many of the thorny and difficult matters which came under his charge. Having said that he was afraid he would now have to proceed to differ with the right hon. Gentleman in regard to some matters. When the Select Committee presented its Report the Postmaster-General intimated in the House that the Government intended to comply with the recommendations of that Committee both in the spirit and in the letter. He only wished that he could agree that the right hon. Gentleman had complied with those recommendations both in the spirit and in the letter. He could not do so, because he believed that in some respects the right hon. Gentleman had departed from both the spirit and the letter of those recommendations. If he remembered the recommendations of the Report aright, one of them was to the effect that no one in the postal service should suffer by the recommendations of the Committee, that everybody should be at least as well off, and that the vast majority should benefit. From what the previous speakers in the debate had said, as well as from other evidence, it was quite clear that in the classification applied by the right hon. Gentleman a great many postal servants would suffer, and he ventured to join in the appeal which had been made urging the Postmaster-General to reconsider the whole basis of the classification, so that not only the existing staff but the new entrants into the service should be placed under far better conditions with regard to pay than was now proposed. He would not go into any illustrations of the hardships to the staff which must ensue from the Postmaster-General's interpretation of the Committee's Report, because that would involve long statements; but before he dealt with any particular class he would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he had made any progress in loosening the Treasury control of the Post Office. In other words, he wanted to know whether the right hon. Gentleman had got any further on the road towards becoming master in his own house. Next to the Army and the Navy, the Post Office was the largest Department of the State in regard to the number of persons employed. It was a Department which made a large profit out of its transactions, and surely the Postmaster-General ought to have the absolute control of all the expenditure necessary for the carrying out of the work entrusted to his charge, and should not be subjected to the control of another Department which could not have the knowledge of this particular work which he possessed. In the Report of the Committee one recommendation was that the Postmaster-General should be free from His Majesty's Office of Works. Hon. Members who had studied the evidence laid before the Committee on this subject would have noticed that astounding revelations were made as to the manner in which in the past the Office of Works had carried out the work entrusted to it by the Post Office. Many of the complaints of the postal staff throughout the country were due to the delay and the inefficient manner in which the Office of Works did their part of Post Office work. He was perfectly well aware that an immediate transfer of all the work from the Office of Works to the Post Office would give rise to practical difficulties. Nevertheless he hoped that some definite steps had been taken in the direction of carrying out this recommendation. Having said that, perhaps he might be allowed for a moment to endeavour to remove a misapprehension which he thought was widely felt by the Post Office employees. It was that the Select Committee had a voice in the carrying out of the recommendations of the Committee. Obviously to suggest that a Committee should interfere with Ministerial responsibility would be quite improper and contrary to all practice. Having examined the evidence and done the work which Parliament entrusted them to do, the labours of the Committee were completed, and having stated their view they had no further responsibility. The full responsibility for the carrying out of the recommendations of the Report must rest upon the Minister in charge of the Post Office. There were a few cases in regard to which he desired to put some questions to the right hon. Gentleman and to offer a few criticisms. In the first place, there was the case of the sub-engineers. When he raised this matter some time ago the right hon. Gentleman said that he would give the subject further consideration. The Committee made very definite recommendations as to what they thought should be done with the sub-engineers, and he was bound to say that he was very much astonished to find that although the evidence justified the view expressed by the Committee, the Postmaster-General had thought fit to declare that the improvements or alterations in the treatment of the sub-engineers were only to apply to new entrants. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would take the whole matter into consideration. He would not trouble the House by quoting any portion of the Report of the Committee on that subject, because he had said enough to show that in his judgment it was never the intention of that body that they should find their recommendations set aside by limiting their application to new entrants and excluding the existing staff. As to linesmen he could not but think that the right hon. Gentleman had fallen into some error in respect to this class, because prior to the Select Committee's Report the maximum pay was 42s. a week, obtainable after twelve years service, when only one class existed. Now, under the new conditions laid down by the Postmaster-General, linesmen were divided into two classes. The second class received 38s. a week, and the first class 47s. a week. In the first class there had been included a number of men who had been promoted to the rank of foremen, who rose to 50s. a week. This had practically filled all the positions in the first class, and had in effect decreased the maximum pay of the linesmen by 4s. a week. The same conditions in this matter applied to the provinces with a difference of 2s. a week. Certainly it was never intended that the application of the Select Committee's Report should result in such a condition of things. He came now to refer to the largest class in the postal service, numbering something like 21,000, namely, the sub-postmasters. There had been great difference of opinion expressed by the Department, the sub-postmasters and others, as to bankers' postal orders. The right hon. Gentleman was conversant with examples to which he had drawn his attention a few days ago, but he might be allowed to say that the main cause of discontent was due to the announcement made by the right hon. Gentleman on 3rd June this year that, in spite of the recommendations of the Select Committee, he would only pay half the scale rate for postal orders paid through bankers—in other words, that the old system was to be maintained. The Committee never said that it should be maintained. He did not wish to weary the House by quoting the Committee's Report. He could read words from the Report showing that they certainly did not come to the conclusion which the right hon. Gentleman had come to as to the unit. The view which the right hon. Gentleman had taken as to the unit was not in the sense of the Committee's Report. Taking one illustration, it worked out as follows:—A sub-post office which in 1905 had a turnover of £83,000 received actual gross pay of £438, whereas under the regulations in respect of postal orders which had been issued by the right hon. Gentleman the sub-postmaster would now on a turnover of over £90,000 be paid only £314 gross, when he ought to receive £325. He did not wish to weary the Committee by going into technical details, but he would content himself by saying that he was sure the Postmaster-General would recognise that this matter was regarded as one of very great importance by the sub-postmasters. He earnestly appealed to the right hon. gentleman to give the matter full reconsideration with the view of meeting what he thought was a very just and business-like view. He wished to say a word or two about the postmen. The Postmaster-General knew that they were very discontented, not only with the application of the Report, but with the Report itself. The way in which the Postmaster-General had applied the Report had had the effect of removing from many of the existing staff the safeguard which the Committee intended to preserve for them in their recommendations. He referred to the safeguard which provided that, though there might be great changes made in the conditions of service, the existing staff, wherever the men might be working, should, in no case, lose in pay or position. Likewise in regard to the auxiliaries he had been grievously disappointed by the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had applied the

Report. The net result was that in many cases the auxiliaries would be worse off, whereas it was the express view of the Committee that their grievances should be removed. A statement had been issued by the right hon. Gentleman in which the benefits conferred on that class were set forth, but he did not think that that exactly described what the position of the auxiliaries was to-day. Referring to London postmen the Committee recommended for the first stripe a qualifying period of five years, and of four years for each succeeding stripe. The staff naturally thought that the right hon. gentleman, in view of the recommendation, would give the benefit to each man according to his service, but the Postmaster-General had decided that the time only dated from the receipt of the last stripe. The right hon. gentleman had no doubt received from the London postmen a pamphlet setting forth their case, and their view of the result of his scheme. In some cases men of shorter service would benefit much more than men of longer service. In fact he had heard of the case of a man who if he had performed fifteen years service on the 20th December, 1907, would only get his third stripe on 20th December, 1911, while another man, who had performed fifteen years service on 20th January, 1908, would get his fourth stripe on 20th December, 1911. Obviously that was unfair, and should be remedied. Another class about whom he would like to say something were the London postal porters, who were drawn from the same source and did the same work. Obviously, they had the same standard of living to maintain as the London postmen. On 20th February last the right hon. Gentleman promised to reconsider his application of the Report to these men, but up to the present moment they had heard nothing further. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman to give them a reply soon, and endeavour to meet their case, which he ventured to submit merited most sympathetic consideration. Then among the supervising force they had very good ground for grievance under the new conditions. Practically it amounted to this. In London there were far fewer superintendents than in the case of big towns like Manchester. The proportion, for instance, in London, S.W., was 1 to 209, whereas in Manchester it was 1 to 37. By keeping this great disproportion between the Metropolitan post offices and the post offices of the great towns, the Department not only created what was a very unfair position, but stopped the legitimate channels for promotion. That, he thought, was not at all in consonance with either the spirit or the letter of the Report, and he earnestly appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to try to remove some of those ridiculous anomalies which prevailed in London. He knew that he might be met in this matter with a technical answer, but he thought that an appeal might be made to the right hon. Gentleman not to allow technicalities to stand in the way. He could not put the matter more succinctly than by giving the facts in connection with a case in his own knowledge. Why should a counter-clerk in Threadneedle Street Post Office, which was only a few yards from Lombard Street Post Office, rise to 65s. a week, while his colleague who was doing precisely the same duty in Lombard Street rose to only 62s. a week? Inspectors, supervisors, and the female staff received equal treatment throughout London, and he would earnestly appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to take some measures to remove this ridiculous anomaly.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON was understood to say that the Committee made no specific recommendation. The time when the hon. Gentleman should have raised the question was when the Committee was sitting and not now.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY differed from the right hon. Gentleman as to his version of the Report but be that as it might, everybody knew that that was a matter of detail in a Report, and that these men were still left with a grievance which should be removed. Even granting, for the sake of argument, that the case might be as the right hon. Gentleman had stated in the interruption, it was obvious, in his judgment, that the Select Committee had made a mistake in making the statement to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, if it was made. He appealed to the Postmaster-General to reconsider the case. He could not deny that he was giving reconsideration to the recommendations of the Committee in regard to other matters. In some cases he had extended the recommendations of the Committee, while in other cases he had limited them. He had endeavoured to put before the Committee some of the urgent cases brought to his attention, and did not want to occupy the time of the Committee further. He would conclude by saying that he trusted that the friendly relations between the right hon. Gentleman and all those who approached him on these subjects—however much they differed from him—would be maintained. And if the right hon. Gentleman kept an open mind on these matters he had no doubt that during the next twelve months a great deal of trouble and discontent would be removed and that the service would be better and happier.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his most amusing and charming exordium which had charmed all those who had watched his career with feelings of joy. There was a class of people who treated serious matters seriously, but another and better class who treated serious matters jocosely. Among those was the right hon. Gentleman, who had drawn a very cheering picture of his Department. However, there were one or two points on which he wished to make a few remarks. The first was as to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that there was a loss on the telegraph business of the Department. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was making his Budget statement he made the suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman, which he now repeated to the Postmaster-General, that all the different businesses of the State should be kept separate from the general business of the nation. All the different Departments should keep separate business accounts showing income and expenditure, and only the balance one way or another should be transferred to the general national account. The present method invalidated all their calculations of national income and expenditure, and prevented the nation from understanding and watching the proceedings of any one particular business. He suggested that the Post Office was one of the businesses which should be run like a private business, and so also the telegraph department. Their accounts should be kept separate and the balance only brought forward. The nation had a right to see every year whether each separate business had been conducted at a profit or a loss. The Postmaster-General had admitted that there was a loss on the telegraphs, but as a business-like nation we had no right to carry on any business at a loss, and if there was a loss it was the duty of the House of Commons to see how they could turn that loss into a profit. Another point to which he wished to refer related to the men in the Post Office who had been reduced. The right hon. Gentleman said it should be borne in mind that in the application of a general rule or principle they must be prepared to have some cases of men being raised or lowered. He was not quite sure that that was a legitimate *sequitur*. He wished to refer to a concrete case in connection with this question of reduction. The wages of the postmen in the Bolton Post Office were reduced from 26s. to 25s. a week, and the maximum wage of the telegraph clerks was reduced 2s. a week. The answer to that was that the reductions did not apply to the present occupants of the posts and that therefore the men had nothing to complain of. Not at all. Hon. Members were there not to look merely at the interests of the men who hold the posts now, but at the interests of the Post Office as a whole. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London made a characteristic interjection during the speech of an hon. Member, in which he said that these men need not remain if they were dissatisfied; that the Department could get plenty more. Of course plenty more men could be got. He would say that if the wages of the men were reduced 7s. a week there would be more applicants for the billets than if the wages were only reduced 1s. a week—more applicants for billets if the wages were reduced from 25s. to 18s. than there would be if the wages were, as in this case, reduced from 26s. to 25s. a week. It was not a question of getting people; but a question of the character of the people they wanted. As an employer in the town of Bolton who knew pretty well the different qualities of labour and the price of labour, he said deliberately that the reduction of the wages of the postmen there from 26s. to 25s. a week was very unfortunate. But, first of all, he should mention that the right hon. Gentleman had treated Bolton very kindly in providing new post office buildings, which were a credit to the town. In reference to the pay of the postmen the right hon. Gentleman said that there was a limit; but he had gone far below the limit. The cost of living had gone up in Bolton not only within the last ten but within the last three or four years, and he believed that it would steadily rise, because there had been a large increase in taxation. Generally speaking, the requirements of living were rising. People had to live now at a higher standard than their forefathers did; and it was the business of the House and of the country to encourage the raising of the standard of living. If they wanted to raise people to a higher plane they should be taught to want much. No one could get the kind of labour necessary for post office work at 25s. a week in Bolton. He ventured to say that they could get plenty of people of a sort, but they would be of a lower quality. The Postmaster-General himself had told how the people he employed in London at Christmas time at 24s. a week brought in an adequate return for the increased wage, because the food they were able to procure was better and made it easier for them to work harder. But here the right hon. Gentleman was going to reduce the wages of the postmen from 26s. to 25s. a week. He had been in the House for many years and knew what pressure was brought to bear sometimes on heads of Departments in regard to wages; but in this case he was only speaking in the abstract, as the reduction in Bolton was only to apply in the future. The experience of the right hon. Gentleman contradicted his action in this matter. He said that this was one of the consequences of the rule laid down by the Hobhouse Committee, and that they must put up with the consequences of it. But the right hon. Gentleman had also said that they were not to expect that the Resolution of the Committee was as absolute as the laws of the Medes and Persians. The Committee was appointed not to dictate to the right hon. Gentleman but to advise him; and if the consequences of that advice were practically unwise, he called upon the right hon. Gentleman to break through the advice when he had shown that in this particular case it was unwise. In any event where it was found that by the working of the rule the wages in the Bolton Post Office were not sufficient to enable the men to keep a proper standard of living, he asked the Postmaster-General to give the rule another application.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon) said he wished to join in the congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman on the approaching extension of the penny post to the United States, and on the great reform he had introduced in regard to the postage of Canadian book-packets. Many years ago he did his best to promote the latter reform, but no one had succeeded in accomplishing it until the right hon. Gentleman had taken it in hand. He knew of nothing which could have a more directly beneficial effect on our relations with Canada than the reform effected by the right hon. Gentleman. He was not going to pretend that private Members should never attempt to force concessions from the heads of an administrative Department; and he wished to bring to the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman a particular case. He represented a Metropolitan constituency in which there were a great many Post Office employees who were affected by the unique finding of the Hobhouse Committee. The scale of living in that constituency was not only as high as the London scale, but was higher than any other town in the country except Devonport. It stood at 104. It happened that one part of Croydon was in the London district, but the great majority of the postmen lived on the other side of the London district boundary line, and this anomaly occurred. There were two sets of men doing the same work under the same conditions as to cost of living and of work; but they did not receive the same pay. In a place like Croydon, where the cost of living was greater than in many other parts of London, it was not a fair thing to draw an artificial line across a particular part and place these restrictions on the men living on one particular side of that line. He had taken some pains to ascertain that what he was saying was correct. The borough of Croydon was to all intents a part of the Metropolitan area, and he asked the right hon. Gentleman to say whether there was not ground for a special investigation with regard to it. The distinction drawn was a purely arbitrary one, and worked very hardly indeed with regard to a large number of men.

*MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) called attention to the grievances of the postal servants at Crewe. In the first place, he said, the maximum wage had been reduced from 26s. to 25s., although it was perfectly true that the reduction affected new entrants to the service and not those at present engaged in it. That reduction had been arrived at in the classification, no doubt, on the computation of the cost of living, rent, and the units of work. So far as the question of rent was concerned, it must be borne in mind that in Crewe they were in a somewhat peculiar position. The average of rent was very greatly affected by the fact that a singularly large number of houses belonged to the London and North-Western Railway Company, who built them for occupation by their own employees. Those houses were let at a lower rent than other houses, those inhabiting them no doubt getting them at that lower rent indirectly as part of their earnings. The employees of the Post Office found that they had to pay at least 1s. a week more for their houses than was paid by their fellow-citizens in the railway company's employ. With regard to the amount of work, he pointed out that there was an enormous amount of work done at Crewe in the transference of mails. Crewe was the largest station for the transfer of mails in the United Kingdom. No less than 23,000 mail bags were transferred from one van to another in the course of a week and no less than 4,000 parcel cases. Those figures showed plainly the amount of work that took place there, and hon. Members who, in the course of their travels, had had to wait at Crewe between the hours of eleven at night and one in the morning had no doubt pleasantly spent their time in watching this work being done. Those who had done so would know from their own experience the amount of work that was done. The transfer of mails naturally entailed a considerable amount of night work. It was calculated that 80 per cent. of all the work done there was night work. This in its turn entailed broken hours and greater needs in the matter of preparing meals and lights and fuel, all of which contributed to the increase of the cost of living. He brought these matters to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman for his best consideration. He pointed out that the towns of Preston and Stoke, where the work was less and where similar reductions had been made, had put their case before the Post Office, which had offered to reconsider their position. He trusted that now the case of Crewe had been brought to the knowledge of the right hon. Gentleman that also would be reconsidered.

*VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford) said that the postal servants in the constituency which he had the honour to represent suffered from very much the same grievances as those for whom the hon. Member for Crewe had just spoken. They thought that when the Hobhouse Committee sat to consider the grievances of the postal servants something would be done to improve their condition, but they found that not only had nothing been done in that regard, but that the maximum salary had been reduced, in the case of postal clerks from 50s. to 48s., and in the case of the postmen from 25s. to 24s. Another grievance which they suffered was in regard to classification. In the classification they were put into the third class, which they considered was not just, contending that they should be placed in a higher class. The position in which the postal clerks found themselves was found on page 58 of the "Postal Changes Paper." They considered that they had been hardly treated, because in the calculations the average taken of the cost of living was not sufficiently high, and their work—the index number of work—in some cases at all events, was the same as that of certain other districts which were put into Class II. The Report made by a representative of the Board of Trade who was sent down to investigate this matter was not concurred in by those living in the district. They contended that he put in a figure for the cost of living far lower than the sum that it actually cost to live, and that his statement with regard to the difference in the pressure of work during the term and during the vacation was not accurate. What struck them and what had struck him was the comparison to be made between Oxford and other towns that were placed in a higher class. In the town of Sunderland the units of work was 558, and the cost of living 99; at Oxford the units of work were 755, and the cost of living 98. The units of work were considerably higher and the cost of living about the same, and the contention of the postmen of Oxford was that that city should be put in the same class as Sunderland which was in the second class, whilst Oxford now was in Class III. In the same way the amount of work in Cambridge was 681 and the cost of living 100, yet that city was classified as below Sunderland. He would like to know on what principle the classification had been arranged. He further pointed out that in the University towns the work of delivery had been considerably increased owing to the new regulations of the Post Office. In former days letters to the collegiates had to be delivered at the porter's lodge, now they had to be delivered at the rooms of the students. He submitted that Oxford should be put in the same class as Sunderland and other towns in the same class, and asked that the figures might be revised with a view that employees of the Post Office in that city might be put in Class II.

*SIR ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorganshire, E.) said that South Wales had been very hard hit by these new regulations. In his own constituency and in that of his hon. friend the Member for the Rhondda Valley there were no less than eighteen reductions in which, if the cost of living and the units of work were taken as the basis, there ought to have been an increase rather than a reduction. He remembered when the number of his constituents was only 7,400; they now numbered over 21,000, and that fact alone showed the large increase which must have taken place in the work of the Post Office servants. He asked the Postmaster-General whether this was not a case for reconsideration, not only in the Welsh districts, but elsewhere, for he thought there was a grievance which could properly be amply considered.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) called attention to the grievance of the postal servants at Feltham and Hounslow, and said the Postmaster-General would hardly consider it fair that in one part of a district the wages should be raised and in another part of it they should be lowered, though the same work was being done, and at the same time the cost of living was larger where the wages had been lowered, than in the part where they had been raised.

MR. P. MEEHAN (Queen's County, Leix), as one who served on the Hobhouse Committee, said that in his opinion the Postmaster-General had interpreted the recommendations of the Select Committee in a liberal and generous spirit. In any revision which took place it was quite possible cases would occur which gave rise to grievances, but he thought it was in the power of the Postmaster-General to remedy certain of those grievances which had been pointed out in the course of the discussion. From the statements made by several hon. Members it appeared to be their idea that when a revision took place that revision must be entirely in the way of increasing salaries, and that no reductions should be made. It was quite true that the discussion was one of considerable importance, and he thought members of the Committee were bound to give an explanation of the grounds on which they had arrived at the conclusions embodied in their Report, and to defend those recommendations if defence were necessary. Since the issue of the Report comments had been made in many newspapers, but especially in the journals of the Service. He did not intend to deal to any extent with the criticisms. He thought criticism was healthy and should be welcomed, and it was welcomed by the members of the Committee, but it should be criticism founded upon justice. To no man in that House or outside it would he yield in his anxiety that one of the most important bodies connected with the public business of the country should have not only a living wage but a just wage, and that the conditions of their employment should be such as to bring about contentment and satisfaction in their occupation. He did not say for one moment that the Report of the Committee was perfect. What human effort had been or ever would be perfect? What he said was that in that Report there were the means of remedying grievances, that it contained a solid foundation on which the administration of the Department could erect a satisfactory scheme, alike beneficial to the nation, while securing to the employees just wages, reasonable concessions, and satisfactory conditions of service, at the same time that they could look forward to an old age of security and comfort. Certain statements had been made in the Service journals that evidence was suppressed, and that certain evidence was ignored. In his opinion that statement was not warranted by the facts of the case. It was true that when the evidence was printed and circulated among the Members, certain portions appeared with parts of the printed type having a mark drawn through certain paragraphs, but in his opinion that had been done with the knowledge and the approval of the Committee, because it referred only to evidence which was a repetition, and to evidence on certain points which had already been dealt with by the Committee. He asserted that there was neither a suppression of evidence nor an ignoring of evidence on any point that it was the duty of the Committee to investigate. It might be said that certain portions of the evidence were ignored because the demands put forward were refused by the Committee. With the permission of the House he would refer to one or two of the claims which the Committee decided that they ought not to recommend. One was on the question of promotion, and it would be found on page 11, paragraphs 92–3, of the Report. The claim made was that promotion should be made whether the state of work justified it or not. The Committee considered that promotion should not be made on that ground. Another claim was as to the question of annual leave, to be found on page 14, paragraph 12. The claim was that annual leave should be confined to six of the best months of the year. The Committee considered that it would be impossible for the Department to give the entire Service annual leave within six months, and the Committee did not recommend that claim. Then there was the question of overtime. The claim was that overtime should be abolished. The Committee thought that overtime could not be abolished, but they recommended that it should be discouraged. It was a remarkable fact that after this claim as to overtime was put forward there appeared in the Service journal in January last, a paragraph condemning the increase of the staff at Christmas in certain offices, thus depriving the men in those offices of the opportunity of earning money by overtime. That was an extraordinary contradiction of the claim put forward that overtime ought to be abolished. Another claim was for second class railway travelling expenses, but the Committee could not see their way to concede second class railway travelling, and did not recommend it. A claim was also made for increased salary because officers had to keep cool heads in order properly to discharge their duties. A claim was further made for increased salary on the ground that postmen frequently, in the course of their work, were rendered liable to sweat and as a consequence to catch cold. He did not know what the opinion of the House would be as to that claim on the part of the Post Office servants. The Committee, however, had not conceded it, though it was their business to mention that which in his opinion would be, if adopted, an attempt to provide machinery to negative the universal decree of God, that by the sweat of his brow man should earn his daily bread. There were other claims which he would not go into. He now turned to the claims admitted and to the recommendations made by the Committee, and to some of the concessions and advantages arrived at. The claim was made as to the question of night duty, and on the recommendation of the Committee in that respect there would be an advantage to the Service estimated at £56,400; and on the question of bank-holidays, the recommendation of the Committee gave an advantage to the Service estimated to the value of £36,900 a year. Under the claim in regard to medical attendance the Committee recommended, and the Department, he believed, had adopted, that every postal official with a salary of less than £150 a year was entitled to free medical attendance. There were other recommendations with regard to auxiliary and casual labour which had been dealt with by the right hon. Gentleman that evening. Another very serious claim was made on the question of counter losses. It was stated in evidence that in many cases the counter losses amounted to nearly half the officer's salary in a week. The recommendation of the Committee was, and it was adopted by the Department, that counter losses should be limited to 10 per cent. of the officer's salary; no matter how great was the loss, whether shillings or pounds, he would not be charged more than 10 per cent. of his salary. In regard to the stripe allowance, the period for obtaining the stripe had been reduced from five to four years. The first stripe came in five years, and the Committee recommended that for each subsequent stripe the period should be reduced to four years. With reference to the scale of pay for postmen the Committee had made certain recommendations which the Department had adopted. With regard to the effects of the recommendations of the Committee on the postal service in London, 6,906 men would benefit at the rate of 1s. per week; 1,071 benefited at the rate of 3s. a week, and 154 lost 1s. a week. In the provinces the benefit amounted to £52,000 a year, and 13,953 men benefited 1s. a week, 2,707 would benefit 2s. a week, 1,100 would benefit 3s. a week, 312 would benefit 4s. a week, 4,321 were unaltered, 5,832 would lose 1s., 222 would lose 3s. But this reduction was for new entrants only, and did not affect any existing officer. For auxiliary postmen the rate of pay had been increased from 4d. to 4½d. The recommendations in the case of counter clerks and telegraphists were estimated at an annual advantage to the class of £26,300 a year, to provincial sorters and telegraphists at £31,500 a year, to female operative classes in London at £68,250, to the supervising class at £47,350, and to clerical and other classes of men and women at £33,860. In respect to the engineer in-chief office, the construction staff, the maintenance and mechanical staff, and electric lighting staff, they had often complained that the men employed on exactly the same work in Ireland were receiving from 3s. to 5s. a week less than men engaged in England and Scotland, and he thanked his colleagues on the Committee for the recommendation which they unanimously joined in making that the treatment of Irish officials should be in every sense on terms of equality with those of the United Kingdom. The result of the recommendations of the Committee as regarded this class amounted to an annual expenditure of £76,090 a year. To sub-postmasters and other classes there was an estimated advantage of £58,850 a year. He quoted these figures in answer to the statement which had been made in some quarters, that the Service had derived very little if any advantage at all from the Hobhouse Committee. The question of civil rights occupied a very large place in the journalistic criticisms of the Committee, and in some speeches made by members of the Post Office Association. The claim put forward for civil rights led in some quarters at all events to the belief that Post Office officials were deprived of every single right of citizenship, but that was not at all the case. They had the Parliamentary franchise, the local government franchise, and every other right of citizenship, with the simple restriction which was common to the Civil Service, that they must not make public speeches affecting the return of any Member of the House, or write public letters in newspapers. He felt that where Post Office officials of any class had every right of citizenship subject to the restriction he had mentioned, their best interest was served by the continuance of that restriction, because not being political partisans they could approach every Member of the House, no matter what his political opinions might be, with sympathy and with confidence to have their grievances redressed, whereas, if they were political partisans they would naturally bring about a feeling of hostility in the minds of some people. In practice how would this matter work out in the interests of the public? Take the case of a contested election. The postmaster went to a public meeting and made a speech in favour of one candidate, his principal officer went on one platform and made a speech for the opposition candidate, and the staff selected a candidate of their own, and they all spoke on behalf of three different candidates. The result would be that the postmaster would not be able to maintain the discipline which was absolutely essential in the public interest. Then one candidate went to the Post Office to send a telegram, and saw the postmaster, who was often making a speech denouncing him, and handed his telegram to a clerk who had also denounced him on a public platform. Could the public have that confidence in the secrecy of the Post Office, and that their business would be transacted in the same satisfactory way as at present, if the staff was given the opportunity of bringing political discussion inside? Then take the case of a thrifty housewife making a deposit in the savings bank. She was compelled to transact her business with some officer who was an opponent of her husband, brother, or son in some local government election. On every ground the best interests of the country were served by the continuance and enforcement of the rule which was applicable to the whole civil service of the country. One of the principal complaints in respect to the Irish service made before the Committee was on the question of promotion. The grievance amounted to a public scandal. The evidence was not given directly by any witness, but was elicited on cross-examination, and the effects of the cross-examination were that while the population of Ireland was 88 per cent. Catholic, and while the rank and file of the service was almost in the same proportion, the non-Catholic element was in possession of almost the whole of the appointments. This could not be brought about by a want of ability in the larger number of the servants. In Dublin, among the principal officials thirty-three holding pensionable appointments were non-Catholics and fifteen were Catholics. He mentioned these matters with a view of pointing out that if the Postmaster-General expected contentment and peace and faithful and zealous discharge of the duties of the Irish branch of the service he must deal with this question with a firm hand. A number of the best men in the service were boycotted from the principal positions. He made no complaint, but asked the right hon. Gentleman with a firm hand to remove from the Irish service this last remnant of the religious ascendency which was the bane and ruin of Irish life. In Cork, seven-eighths of the population were Catholic. The postmaster, the chief clerk, the superintendent of telegraphs, and the entire heads of staff were exclusively Protestant. In Limerick, fifteen of the principal offices were exclusively Protestant, though seven-eighths of the population were Catholic. He hoped an absolutely necessary reform would be brought about. He did not want to trespass on the time of the House further than to say upon the question of salary that in his opinion the Committee did well in the recommendations which they made. It was quite possible that cases might arise where it would be the duty of the Postmaster-General to remedy certain grievances in the course of carrying out his system of classification. With regard to the advantages accruing to Ireland from the Committee's Report, he thought his colleagues would agree with him when he said that the country they represented was well to the front. In regard to the indoor staff, in eighty-three head offices the salaries were raised, in twenty-one they were unaltered, and in five they were reduced. In the case of sorting clerks and telegraphists, five officers received an increase of 6s. per week, six an increase of 4s. a week, 462 an increase of 2s. per week, and 839 remained unaltered. He submitted to the right hon. Gentleman that this was a very large number to remain unaltered. Nearly all those men expected that they would get some increase and some advantage from the Committee's Report. Therefore he earnestly appealed to the right hon. Gentleman that the case of those 839 men should be taken into consideration with a view to bettering their position and giving them some share in the advantages which their fellow-workers were going to receive. In his own constituency, six received an increase of 5s., fifty-five 2s., and 115 1s. per week. In regard to postmen, 632 would get an increase of 3s., 213 2s., 157 1s. per week, and 395 would remain unaltered. The average increase per officer in the United Kingdom was for sorting clerks and telegraphists 9d., females 1s., postmen 1s. In Ireland, sorting clerks and telegraphists would receive an average rise of 7d., female staff 10d., and postmen 1s. 4d. The average showed that Ireland got 2s. 9d. and the United Kingdom 2s. 4d. He was pleased with the recommendations of the Committee and the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had carried them out, for the result had been that a long-delayed act of justice had been done to a class of public servants in Ireland. He desired again to thank the Postmaster-General for the satisfactory manner in which he had interpreted the recommendations of the Committee.

*SIR H. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.) said he wished to join in the tribute of appreciation and gratitude to the right hon. Gentleman for the admirable series of reforms that he had announced that day. He doubted whether any Postmaster-General had ever had such a good record, and unless he surpassed himself in years to come, this year would probably long remain a record. He desired to call attention for a moment to the reform initiated regarding the circulation of magazines to Canada. That was a concession that he had agitated for for many years. He remembered being a member of a deputation which waited upon the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire when he was Postmaster-General. He received the deputation courteously, but he told them that it was quite impossible to grant what they suggested, and the idea dropped. Therefore he was particularly glad that the present Postmaster-General had been able to make this truly Imperial reform so promptly and satisfactorily. He need hardly say that in the criticism he was going to make he did not speak in any carping spirit. The right hon. Gentleman had only to proceed with the same courage and devotion in other matters which had been brought to his notice, and then he would settle them all in accordance with the wish of every Member of the House. It must be evident to the right hon. Gentleman, from the number of anomalies which had already been pointed out, that the present state of things could not continue. Almost every hon. Member of the House could furnish examples of anomalies and injustices arising in his own constituency from the putting in force of the new regulations. Wolverhampton was not itself in his constituency, but there the maximum had been reduced from 28s. to 25s. per week, and in Bilston, where the cost of living was higher, it had been reduced from 25s. to 23s. per week. As the hon. Member for the Ince division had well said, they strongly resented that a great Department of State, as the result of a great inquiry, should proceed to lower wages in many directions. That certainly was a retrograde step. They might, after such an inquiry, leave wages where they were, or increase them, but surely they could not go about here and there in a more or less arbitrary manner reducing the wages of a none too well-paid body of servants of the State. How they could be satisfied to do that certainly passed his comprehension. In Bilston, postmen's wages were to be reduced from 24s. to 23s. It was a very poor story that a great party of reform, as the result of an inquiry by an admirable Committee, and the expenditure of an additional £600,000 rising to £1,000,000, should produce as one of the results of the whole business that the poor postmen of Bilston were to be docked 1s. per week. He thought his right hon. friend would see that that was a state of things which called for his very careful consideration. With regard to substitutes for postmen, he was informed from Bilston that adult substitutes doing whole time and work were receiving only 16s. a week. If that was the case, he submitted it was not the wage which a great Department of State ought to pay to a man of that character doing a full week's work. Even the scavenger in Bilston got £1 a week, and a man performing the responsible duties of a postman would naturally feel himself under a great grievance, and would certainly be justified in taking that attitude, if he only received 16s. a week. He earnestly hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give the questions he had raised his favourable consideration.

*MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he wished to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to some questions which arose on the Report of the Hobhouse Committee, more particularly with regard to classification. He was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman state that when the Select Committee made a Report, it was the duty of the Government and the House to accept it in full. That might be advisable in some cases, but it would be a very dangerous precedent to establish for the future. They were all well aware that the inquiry of the Hobhouse Committee, in many respects, had turned out well, but it could not be overlooked that the Report had brought about a certain amount of dissatisfaction. There was much dissatisfaction in large towns like Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin and Edinburgh, arising from the fact that the Committee had apparently left stationary the maximum rate of pay. That maximum had remained for seventeen years, and it was not to be altered. No one complained of the rise of pay in the case of female telegraphists, but it seemed very hard that some employees should remain at the stationary figure when others had been raised by 3s. a week. Though that had happened in the larger towns, in the smaller towns the persons employed had received substantial increases. In Wolverhampton, the scale for future entrants was to be 17s., with a yearly rise of 1s. to 25s. At the present time it was 19s., with a yearly rise of 1s. 6d. to 28s., so that this meant practically a reduction of 3s. a week. He contended that that was not in accord with the Report of the Hobhouse Committee. He did not agree with the interpretation that the right hon. Gentleman had put upon the Report of the Committee; in fact, he thought the Postmaster-General had brought to bear upon the Report an interpretation of his own which the actual words would not bear. He had stated that the classification should be the same for the indoor and the outdoor staff, but as a matter of fact he had levelled down the postmen instead of adopting the levelling-up process which was in the mind of the Committee. The hon. Member for Stockport, who was a member of the Committee, in speaking upon this subject last year said—

> "The idea of the Committee was that all the scales of postmen should be advanced 1s. on their maximum. When the Committee framed the scales, they did so with the idea that the postmen with 26s. maximum should get 27s. They expected that in a few odd cases that might not be done, but they never anticipated the wholesale reduction of the maximum which would occur under this classification."

That was the view taken by one of the Members of the Committee, and that was the interpretation he put on the findings of the Committee, and it was distinctly different from the interpretation of the Postmaster-General. He wanted to get from the right hon. Gentleman an undertaking that he would put some of those grievances right. If there was any doubt about what the Committee intended, the right hon. Gentleman might call the Committee together again for the purpose of framing their Report in language which they could all clearly understand. The Postmaster-General had gone upon the levelling-down process, and wages had dropped from 30s. to 25s. As he had already stated, there had been no rise of the maximum for seventeen years, although during that time the cost of living had considerably increased and was still increasing. If they raised the wages of the female telegraphists and the female staff, who were mostly unmarried, surely they ought to raise the wage of that class of Post Office servants who were mostly married and had families to support. That was one of the reasons why he urged that something should be done to rectify this grievance. The right hon. Gentleman had said that those employed by the Post Office prior to 1908 would not be affected by anything in these new regulations, and that the terms upon which they entered the postal service would not be affected. He had had his attention drawn to the case of a postman employed in Wolverhampton, who, along with others, was sent out to a district surrounding the town on the clear understanding that he should come back to the rate of wages he used to receive at the Central Office. His old wages were 28s. He had come back to the Central Office, but instead of getting 28s. a week, to his disgust he found that on the new scale he was only entitled to 25s. He did not think that was fair. At Dudley the rate of pay was 44s. for many years, and was now reduced to 40s. What the employees asked was that the right hon. Gentleman should give an unmistakable interpretation to the Report of the Committee. They said that if the Report of the Committee was fairly interpreted they would abide by it. The way in which the Postmaster-General read the Report made them think that they were suffering a grievance, and that something should be done in the way of having the Report remodelled, or by the Postmaster-General reconsidering the matter. Passing from that subject, he reminded the right hon. Gentleman that he had for some years written to him about the Post Office situated at Old Hill. He returned to this subject for the third time in the hope that the right hon. Gentleman would do something for that district. If the Postmaster-General was under the least apprehension that there was any political motive at the back of the demand in regard for that post office, he could assure him that that was not so. The majority of those who formed a deputation to him some time ago held the same views as the right hon. Gentleman and not those of hon. Members on that side of the House, but all were equally desirous that that post office should be increased in size or that a new one should be built. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would give the matter his earnest consideration.

*SIR JOSEPH LEESE (Lancashire, Accrington) said he rose to ask one Question, and that was whether the Postmaster-General had laid down a hard and fast rule as to classification, or whether on good cause being shown he would reconsider any case where the reduction was believed to act oppressively.

*MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich) said that having regard to the number of hon. Members who desired to take part in the debate, it was not his intention to occupy the attention of the Committee at any great length. He would like to associate himself with his hon. friend the Member for the Ince division, in assuring the Postmaster-General that in the criticism they were compelled to offer they were in no way inspired by personal dislike, but that their criticism was rather aimed at the permanent officials behind the right hon. Gentleman. There was no denying the fact that profound dissatisfaction existed throughout the service at the result of the Hobhouse Committee Report and the interpretation put upon its recommendations. It was not his intention to go at length into these matters, for the hon. Member for the Ince division had expressed their views fairly and with lucidity. He and his friends were concerned to find that a number of employees of the State were subject to a reduction in their *status.* It was quite true that the right hon. Gentleman had assured the Committee that afternoon that none of the present men would be subjected to a reduction in their wages. But nevertheless they kept in view the fact that the present wages had been in existence for seventeen or eighteen years, and that by the natural flux of time those wages had been reduced in their purchasing value, and they felt that a strong case existed for a general increase of wages being granted to all those men. During the past seventeen or eighteen years it was undeniable that the cost of living had greatly increased. It was also a desirable thing that the standard of life of the workers should be elevated, and therefore they could not contemplate with any complacency a reduction in the *status* of any number of workmen, whether in the employ of the Government or in outside concerns. It was not really his purpose to deal with that particular point, but there were two questions to which he wished to direct the attention of the Postmaster-General. First of all, he would like to raise the question of the auxiliary postman. He confessed that when he was first induced to look into this question he regarded an auxiliary postman as a man who was drawn in occasionally to the postal service, but he was a little surprised to find that some of these men had as many as twenty or thirty years service. They had to perform the same duties as the established postmen, and the point he wanted to submit to the right hon. Gentleman was the desirability of abolishing auxiliary postmen as far as possible. He knew that in answer to direct representation made to him on the matter the Postmaster-General had given a reply which was tantamount to a promise that he would give the closest personal consideration to the question with a view to the reduction of the auxiliaries, and with the ultimate aim of abolishing them altogether. To show that these men were subject to grave abuse he would state a few facts to the Committee. He had had laid before him the cases of two men, one established and the other auxiliary, and both having fourteen years service in the postal department. The auxiliary man was receiving 12s. per week in wages, and 6d. per hour for overtime, without any of the privileges enjoyed by the established postman. The established postman with the same length of service was receiving 32s. a week, with 2s. extra allowance, an allowance of 21s. for boots, holiday allowance of 16 days, and full sick pay It seemed to him utterly impossible to reconcile on any principle of justice the different treatment of these two men, who were doing practically the same class of work. The men in one case were giving a limited number of hours service, but he did not see why there should be such disparity in remuneration as he had indicated. He did not see that the Post Office had any excuse for the continuance in any large measure of this class of workmen, and he sincerely trusted that the intention of the right hon. Gentleman would be accelerated and that a material improvement would take place. He hoped that this class would be entirely abolished. The second question he desired to raise—and he did so in no carping spirit, because he knew that investigations were already in progress—was the desirability of the Post Office abolishing contracting altogether. He felt that the mail-cart drivers should be in the direct employment of the Department. The abuses to which he desired to draw the attention of the Committee undoubtedly arose out of the contract system. To prove that the grievance to which he alluded was a substantial one he would give a few facts. The city mail drivers in Norwich were employed by contractors; they worked seventy-three hours per week, and every third week when the men had to do a rotation of Sunday labour they worked seventy-six and a quarter hours. For these inordinately long hours of labour the men received the unhandsome remuneration of 17s. a week. He had already drawn the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to this matter, but he brought it before the Committee in order to prove that there was a substantial grievance. The city parcel cart drivers were in a similar category. He was assured that the figures he was quoting had been investigated since he was requested to look into the matter. The wages of that class were 15s. a week for a number of hours approximating to seventy per week. The country mail-cart drivers also had a substantial grievance, which, again, he believed was due to the prevalence of the contract system. The wages in their case averaged from 15s. to 17s. per week. These men had to work seven days per week, they got no holiday allowance, no sick pay, and nothing was allowed for accommodation or sustenance. It seemed to him that as long as the contract system was recognised by the Post Office Department these abuses must continue. Undoubtedly they were very widely prevalent in the land. He knew that the Postmaster-General had no sympathy with these abuses, and since he took control of the Department he had viewed with misgiving the conditions of labour of these contract men. The right hon. Gentleman had approached the Treasury to sanction the appointment of an inspector, whose duty it was to inquire into the conditions of labour of the men employed by the various contractors in his Department. But it was certainly impossible for any inspector, or any number of inspectors, to make themselves thoroughly cognisant of the conditions of labour of all those men. He felt that the right hon: Gentleman would be well advised if he turned his attention to the desirability of abolishing contract service entirely, so that they might be able to say that all the employees of the State were on the established service, and that the House of Commons had direct control over their conditions of labour, knew what they were doing, and that for their work they were receiving a reasonable rate of pay. He desired to point out that Norwich was practically in a similiar position to York in regard to cost of living. Mr. Rowntree found that in York the irreducible minimum on which a man was able to maintain himself, his wife and family, was 21s. 8d. a week. The facts which he had stated showed that there were men doing work in the postal service who were receiving 16s. and 17s. per week. It was a disgrace to the country, and it was desirable that the Department should exercise its ingenuity immediately in order to abolish what was a disgrace to a civilised community. He acknowledged the improvements which the right hon. Gentleman had already effected in connection with the postal service, and the few observations which he had addressed to the Committee were not dictated by any captious spirit, but he felt that these facts should be known. He urged that the contract system should be abolished, and that the House should take the control of all those engaged in the postal service.

*MR. HILLS (Durham) said he wished to direct attention to the scale of pay of postmen, which he was certain wanted reconsideration. He was sure that the right hon. Gentleman had no desire to inflict hardship on anyone, but hon. Members who were interested in the Post Office service must make a stand now if they were to have a chance of securing a reconsideration of the scale of wages. He had taken the trouble to work out the figures in the circular issued by the Department in February last, and he found that in no less than thirty-one towns out of 102 the scale of pay was reduced. And the class of town where the reduction was the most frequent were the manufacturing towns such as Darlington, Grimsby, Huddersfield, Middlesbrough, Paisley, and Greenock. Moreover, nearly all the reductions had taken place in the lower scales of pay. Most of them were in the third class, in which the maximum was 25s. a week. The reductions had also taken place in the towns where the cost of living was dearer than elsewhere. The two factors which seemed to determine the scale of pay were units of work and cost of living; but he could not make out which was the main factor. He wanted to know what was the comparative value of the two factors. It seemed to him that the unit of work was very bad. In the large and highly organised offices the unit of work was bound to be higher than in the smaller offices. In the former, the work was portioned out and distributed to different classes of workers; while in the latter the men had to take all kinds of work. The men in the small offices worked as long hours as the men in the big offices, and it was unfair that they should suffer by being placed on a lower scale of wages. The existing scale might apply very well if the offices all over the country were of the same size, but it could not be justly applied equally to the different classes of office. He would say that a far better standard of wage would be the cost of living, although the scale must be modified to a certain extent by the class of work. But in any case the present scale operated very badly. The scheme hit the suburbs of large towns very heavily, because the cost of living there was as high as in the towns. In Scotswood, for instance, which was really a suburb of Newcastle, all the prices of food and the conditions of life were as high as in Newcastle, while the pay was much lower. Again in Alnmouth, which was a watering-place, the cost of living was even higher, and yet the maximum was fixed at 21s. as against 30s. a week in Newcastle. The Department ought to make a better appreciation of the various districts than had been done. The classification according to units of work ought to be reconsidered, if not abolished altogether. He had taken great trouble to understand what the unit of work really meant, but it was absolutely incomprehensible to him. He did not think it represented a fair standard of what a man did. For all these reasons, he hoped that before it was too late the whole scheme would be reconsidered. He was perfectly certain that the right hon. Gentleman had no desire to be harsh, but he must feel that there was a large and growing uneasiness all over the country in regard to the working of the scheme, and he believed that a certain amount of pressure exercised by the right hon. Gentleman himself would effect a great reform.

*Mr. WILES (Islington, S.) said he did not wish to compete with many hon. Members in voicing the woes of the Postal Staff in his own constituency only, but desired to point out general cases which required reconsideration and not in any way to harass the Postmaster-General, but to help make the servants of the Post Office who, were always loyal and ready to help him in any way, more contented and more comfortable. The first class he wished to mention were the postal porters, a class entirely employed in in London. They came under Zone 1, and consisted mostly of old soldiers and sailors. Up to the inquiry of 1882 their maximum wage was 27s.; it was then raised to 30s.; since which time they had received no increase at all. These men had put forth their claim before the Hobhouse Committee in a very reasonable way, and had shown how the cost of living, rents, and rates had increased in London. The work demanded of them required more intelligence than it did twenty-six years ago, and he asked the Postmaster-General to consider their case again and see whether he could not increase their maximum rate of pay. Another matter to which he wished to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman was the allowance made to the postmen who travelled in mail vans. When they had a long journey to make and had to sleep out, it was the custom to grant an allowance of 3s. a night for food and lodging. But another class who travelled in the same van and did the same sort of work received 4s. a night. It seemed to him very strange that of two men travelling in the same van and sharing often the same lodging, one should receive 4s. and the other only 3s. He hoped the Postmaster-General would adjust this difference. It would not cost much money, and it was one of those pin-pricks which caused dissatisfaction, but which was easy to remedy. He also called attention to paragraph 406 of the Hobhouse Report, which dealt with head postmen. The Report recommended that in the City of London Division a new class termed "head postmen" should be appointed, but up to the present time the Postmaster-General had not made any such appointments. There were few openings for the rank and file of the City postmen to rise to, and they had lost some of the opportunities they formerly had of becoming lobby officers. He hoped the Postmaster-General would see his way to carry out that recommendation and make appointments at once. He believed that when the City postmen interviewed the right hon. Gentleman they submitted to him a scheme for the rearrangement of duties which they knew from experience would make the work of the office run more easily and yet not cause any extra expense. He was sorry to say that the right hon. Gentleman had not yet given any reply or criticism of their scheme, and he would press him to consider the suggestions and give some reply. There was a great discrepancy also in the payment of certain telegraphists. They had heard that to-day two members of the staff at the Central Telegraph Office had got a maximum of 65s., but operators who did absolutely the same class of work in the Metropolitan district offices and had received the same education, and had passed the same examination, only rose to a maximum of 62s. It seemed to him that there was something radically wrong there. It came out very clearly in the case of the Threadneedle Street Office, which dealt with the Stock Exchange telegrams, where the maximum was 65s., while the telegraphists in the Lombard Street Office who dealt with the more weighty messages from the great banks, only rose to a maximum of 62s. He thought that if the same rate of pay were paid to all telegraphists in the Metropolitan area the right hon. Gentleman would find that he would get a far better result in the work done, and that there would be fewer grumbles. He should like to refer to the engineers and mechanics, a class that had been referred to by another hon. Gentleman and who were not on the establishment. He noticed that the Committee's Report suggested that these men, after having been employed five or six years in the factories, should be placed on the establishment. He personally thought that three or four years trial in the workshops should be a sufficient test before placing them on the establishment, and he asked whether they could not be established after that period. He noticed a suggestion on page 44 of the new paper just issued by the Postmaster-General, that as vacancies occurred in certain classes their work should be put out to contract. It seemed to him that such a thing was in this twentieth century a retrograde movement. That a great Department like the Post Office should think of putting out work which could be done far better and cheaper by the Department, was a very great mistake indeed. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way rather to increasing the work that was done in this department than putting it out to contract. He would like to say a few words in regard to the telephone staff at the General Manager's Office, Carter Lane. He pointed out that the staff was created in 1901; in 1904 women clerks were introduced and were put on the establishment. But strange to say, the men who had been at work there since 1901, and also those who had come in afterwards, had never been established. It seemed to him only fair that these clerks should be put in the same position as men who did the same class of work in other departments of the Post Office. Therefore he put it to the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not see his way now to assure the House that he would at once place this class also on the establishment. Another question he desired to raise once again was that of Christmas boxes. The matter came before the Hobhouse Committee, and he was sorry to say that that Committee could not see its way to come to any conclusion. It was the almost unanimous demand of postmen that this unsatisfactory system should be done away with. It was a most degrading—a most wretched system. The public who gave these tips would be the persons who would have to pay the extra wages which would be demanded for their abolition. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not allow his brilliant term of office to come to a close without bringing this degrading system to a termination. The system of allowing part of the Civil Service to go round touting for tips to make up what was admitted to be inadequate wages was most lowering and should be entirely abolished. He thought the restrictions placed on the civil rights of postmen by the regulation of a previous Postmaster-General were most extraordinary. By that rule they were "not allowed to become candidates for a county council" as regards the district in which they were employed, nor might they sit on a committee which had for its object to prevent or promote the return of a particular candidate. He would not say anything as to the postman becoming a candidate or having a seat on the county council, because his duties took so long a time that it would be impossible for a postman to be a county councillor and carry out his office duties too. A postman could take part in a borough council election and sit on a borough council, but for some extraordinary reason he could take no part in county council matters. The county council had nothing to do with the Post Office or its management, yet the postman was not allowed to speak or serve on a committee except it was in a district in which he did not work. That restriction worked out in a most extraordinary fashion. For instance, a man working at the Mount Pleasant Office and living on the south side of the City Road, could take no part in L.C.C. elections, because he both lived and worked in Finsbury; he must be dumb! But another worker at Mount Pleasant living on the north side of the City Road, in Islington, might speak or canvass or exercise any of the ordinary rights of a citizen at election time. This was one of those little grievances which it was impossible for the right hon. Gentleman himself to remedy, but he knew he was in agreement with him in this injustice and he hoped the Postmaster-General would get the assistance of his colleagues and remove this disability from the postal servants. He made these criticisms in no unfriendly or carping spirit, but that he might by these suggestions assist his right hon. friend to remedy the grievances which he had pointed out.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said it would be ungenerous on the part of any Member representing Liverpool to take part in this debate without congratulating the right hon. Gentleman on his brilliant record. His record of the past year would compare with that of any previous Postmaster-General. His achievements were so varied and the results so brilliant that it would not be generous to take part in the debate without testifying to them. There was not a man in the House who had not had occasion to communicate privately or otherwise with the Postmaster-General, and all acknowledged his invariable courtesy. It was, therefore, with the greater difficulty Members, like himself, who sometimes fell foul of some of the arrangements of the Post Office, found themselves obliged to call attention to sundry matters of which they did not approve. He could not help thinking that if the Postmaster-General with his great ability and the assiduity with which he devoted himself to the work of the Department, would throw into the fire the Reports of some of the Committees that had sat and deal with the difficulties in a manner which he thought was right and just, a large number of these anomalies would disappear. There were a number of very serious anomalies, anomalies so serious as to be stupid when stated. There was the case of the counter-clerk at Lombard Street who could only rise to 63s., and the counter-clerk at Threadneedle Street whose maximum was 65s. Yet it was obvious if one went to these offices, as he had done, that both men were on a par and did exactly similar work. Then if the provincial towns were taken, it would be found that one of the things of which the skilled telegraphists complained was that the maximum of 56s., which was fixed in 1890, was still the maximum to which they could attain. If they took into account the increased cost of living, rent, rates, and other matters, it was an undoubted fact that if 56s. was a proper maximum in 1890, it was not a proper one in 1908, and that it ought to be revised. They had heard it stated by the Postmaster-General, in fact the remark was made last year, that no existing servants of the Post Office would suffer in consequence of the changes adopted. He fancied that that was not quite correct. There were some who would suffer; at all events, it was correct to say that there would be reductions in the case of future employés in 237 offices of the country. In regard to the Hobhouse Report they had heard speeches from two Members of the Committee. He had listened to those speeches, and he had found that the interpretation put upon the recommendations was not the interpretation which the Postmaster-General put upon them. Some of them who had taken an active part in trying to find out what the real grievances of the Post Office servants were, and to understand the recommendations of the Committee, felt that where the Hobhouse Report broke down was that it did not express in clear and intelligible language what the Committee evidently meant. There were several more points on which they had heard speeches that day, and also on previous occasions, from various members of the Committee, and it was perfectly plain that in coming to that final Report, and in making themselves parties to that Report, they were under the impression that they were agreeing to it on a different interpretation from that which was put upon it now. What was the remedy for the state of affairs disclosed by the debate? They had had Member after Member for the Metropolis and for different towns of the country getting up in that debate, and with the exception of the members of the Committee, they had all finished their observations by calling attention to something which they considered to be wrong. He ventured to think that a matter of this sort ought to be taken out of the purview of the House of Commons. It was not fair to the House to discuss differences as regarded a shilling on wages; it was not the place for the discussion of the principles of the promotion of hundreds of men, many of whom were electors. It was a very serious position indeed which arose in consequence of it, and he thought that the Postmaster-General ought to be convinced, after hearing the general condemnation of the system, that it was high time that something should be done to put an end to such a state of things. If he might take an opportunity of repeating what had been said on this head there should be an independent Committee appointed to confer and advise with the heads of Departments, and to take into account the wages of all the Civil servants and the system of promotion, so that an independent body dealing with all these matters could do justice. He was one of those who supported the late Government, yet on this question of the postal telegraph servants he had consistently, for the last six years, supported a Parliamentary inquiry with regard to their case. He was very disappointed to find that the Hobhouse Committee had made such a mess of it. Notwithstanding the ability of the chairman and the devotion of the members of the Committee, they had brought out a lamentable Report The Postmaster-General himself in the past year had been engaged in some very great works; he had accomplished some magnificent results; but he had not had time to turn his undoubted abilities to the details of the postal service; he contented himself by saying that there was a Parliamentary Report and that he was going to carry that out to the letter. He (Mr. Rutherford) thought that the right hon. Gentleman ought to be convinced by this debate, if he had never been convinced before, that it was time that his attention was given to this matter and that he should consider these grievances.

MR. CROSFIELD (Warrington) said that in his constituency the proposed change was regarded as a retrograde movement, and he, therefore, was very glad of the opportunity of saying a few words on the subject. Taking the ordinary rate of wages in Warrington, after this reduction there would be a minimum wage of 17s. 2d. which was lower than was paid to labourers, and the maximum rate of 25s. would be little more than was paid to bricklayers or labourers. He would be very sorry to say a word in disparagement of the position of the ordinary day labourer. For himself he always thought that the labourers perhaps deserved more consideration than any other class of workmen. But after all, if one considered what was expected in the postal service—irreproachable character, and the position which was to be kept up—he thought that one must recognise that the rate of remuneration should be higher than had been paid to the class of workers to whom he had just alluded. Certainly there had been an increase in the cost of living, and for the life of him he could not see the slightest reason for any reduction being made. Through the invariable courtesy of the right hon. Gentleman he had had an opportunity of mentioning this matter to him privately, and he hoped that what had been suggested by so many speakers might be reconsidered, because there was a very strong feeling existing about it. With regard to the maintenance of a proper standard of pay and of hours of labour, he could only say that they wanted to keep to a happy mean. No Member of that House felt more strongly than he did on this subject. The people of this country were coming more and more to recognise the advantages of seeing that proper remuneration was given and proper hours of labour fixed. He trusted that the matter would be reconsidered by the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) thought that if the debate had demonstrated anything, it had demonstrated to the Postmaster-General and his staff that a very strong feeling had been aroused against the Hobhouse Report. He wanted at the outset to state that so far as the Postmaster-General was concerned, whether he had consulted him in public or in private, he had always found him most courteous and willing to hear anybody who had a grievance to state. Therefore he wished it to be understood that whatever he said with regard to the changes which had been made, at all events he did not desire that his remarks should be taken as applying directly to the right hon. Gentleman or the position which he occupied. When this matter first came up he gave it very careful consideration, because Sunderland was one of the districts which was hit very hard—3s. off the maximum, and 2s. off the minimum. In justification of this very great change they were referred to the Board of Trade Returns with regard to the cost of living—and he quite recognised that if anything was to be done, and the post office servants were to get back to their original position, they would have to show that with regard to the cost of living and the volume of work the Board of Trade Returns were wrong. The change had been made upon these Board of Trade Returns, and he wanted to consider them in reference to Sunderland, which he knew was in a similar position to that of many other places in the country. The Board of Trade Returns actually had the audacity to set forth that the rents were higher in the poorer quarters of the town to which he belonged than in the parts of the town where the artisan class were living. And it was upon these incorrect Returns that the case had been built up in order to justify the reduction of wages to a very great extent. From that standpoint alone the Board of Trade Returns stood condemned. He knew of his own knowledge that what applied to the town of Sunderland in regard to the inaccuracy of these Returns was true of many towns up and down the country. Then, as to the cost of living in Sunderland compared with London, they found with the exception of coal that it was as high in the one as in the other, yet there was anything from 6s., 7s., 8s., and 10s. a week less wages paid in Sunderland than in London. He could not understand how any Committee could take Returns of that kind without any investigation or verification, and make them the basis of their recommendations. As to the cost of living the Board of Trade Returns were absolutely wrong. If the reductions had been made upon such false Returns the matter ought to be put right at once, for this system was to continue for many years, and it ought to be put right now, and men ought not to be penalised for many years to come. The wages in Newcastle were full 5s. per week more than at Sunderland. There was no difference in the circumstances of the two places, though there was this great difference of wages. He did not think there was a difference of more than

1s. a week for skilled artisans on the Wear and on the Tyne, though there was to be a difference of 5s. a week as between Post Office employees. He considered the system entirely bad, and the same might be said as to the volume of work argument. According to the unit of work system a letter counted one, a telegram thirteen, a money order ten, and a postal order two units. He wanted the Committee to recognise straight off that, in regard to this particular work at all events, the outside staff had nothing whatever to do with the volume of work in the office. Take a garrison town or a naval port where money orders and postal orders were issued to a large extent. No man worked longer than any other, but these people, because they issued money orders and postal orders, had an opportunity of getting a greater volume of work than an office where they might do ordinary routine work and probably work harder than the employees in those other towns. Then take a place like York, which was a receiving centre for Hartlepool, Darlington, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Sunderland, etc. The letters came into the office and went straight away. They were not delivered by the postman, yet the postman would get the benefit according to this system, of the volume of work. The system was absolutely wrong, and he defied anyone to justify it. When the examiners went to these towns did they inquire into the whole work appertaining to the postal system of the town? He would like to have the reports if possible. Everyone recognised that the cost of living during the past ten or seventeen years had increased enormously, yet there was practically no increase of the wages of the postal employees. Probably he would be told they ought to let the postal system by contract. At all events, whatever might be urged in regard to economy in other Departments, economy could not be urged in regard to the postal system. They had no right to make the immense profit they did, and penalise the postal employees the way they were doing. There was something like 16s. difference as between large offices and small, and that was an immense difference. and he did not think the hours would vary very much. He did not agree with his hon. friend on the benches higher up in regard to the question of citizenship. They had no right to deny to these men their full rights of citizenship and so penalise them because they happened to be Government employees. He would always give his support and fight for them and would not rest content until every man, whether a Government employee or not, had the fullest possible liberty to express his opinion in regard to matters appertaining to the government of the land and his own particular interests. He did not blame the Postmaster-General. The Committee had given him these two things to work on—the cost of living and the unit system, but let them have the matter put right now. He felt assured that if he went carefully into it many men who had suffered reduction during the past year would, at all events, have a substantial increase. The Postmaster-General had put the postmen of his town back 2s., but he wanted them (the whole of the employees) back to what they originally had at the very least.

MR. LUKE WHITE (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose) said that as a result of the new classification there were a number of seaside resorts in which there would be a considerable reduction in the rate of wages, and he appealed to the Postmaster-General to give special consideration to those cases. He believed the Postmaster-General would acknowledge that the postmen in seaside resorts deserved special consideration. In the past the cost of living and other circumstances had been taken into consideration, and if this scheme was allowed to continue a number of postmen in seaside resorts would have their wages reduced. In his own constituency in Bridlington there would in future be a considerable reduction in the rate of wages. In another town, of an exactly similar character, the rate of pay had been increased. He took it that the Postmaster-General did not wish to do injustice to any town. He rose for the purpose of calling special attention to the case of Bridlington, because he believed that if all the circumstances of that town were taken into consideration some alteration would be made in regard to its classification as it now appeared. He hoped that after special inquiry the Postmaster-General would find that Bridlington deserved a better classification, and that some alteration would be made to give it the full rate of wages to which it was entitled.

*MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green) said that after the speeches they had heard it would be admitted by the Postmaster-General that widespread discontent existed among Members with reference to the administration of the Hobhouse Report. All the speakers had expressed dissatisfaction and called for a revision of the Report. The Hobhouse Committee was established for the purpose of trying to set at rest the discontent which it was known existed among the members of the postal service. He said unhesitatingly that the findings of the Committee had not met the just claims of the postal service, and he held that it was the duty of the House to do everything in their power to bring the service into such a state of satisfaction as would be the means of producing efficiency and also of enabling these men to carry out the important duties entrusted to them with satisfaction to themselves and to the country. To show how anxious the postal servants felt in reference to the way the Committee had carried out their work, he would quote the finding of the Postal Association—

> "The recommendations cannot be expected to remove the prevailing discontent, and, at the most, are only offered as a palliative. The failure in this respect is the more inexcusable as a reference to the Bradford Committee s Report would have shown that such revision is not only possible, but practicable, and, in their opinion, would result in greater efficiency and economy."

That was the opinion expressed by the men directly interested, and he thought the Postmaster-General, who had done so much, and who, he was satisfied, had shown himself sympathetic and anxious to better the condition of the staff under him, would do well if he would take into serious consideration the revision and alteration of the Report altogether. The Committee said that the recommendations they had made had not been given effect to. That was a matter of opinion. They had heard that their recommendations had been misinterpreted, and if the Committee had not put before the Postmaster-General their recommendations in a sufficiently clear and vivid manner, it was the duty of the Postmaster-General himself, seeing the universal chorus of disapprobation that had been expressed, to take steps to meet the wishes of Members, and especially the members of the Postal Association. If the conditions and recommendations had given dissatisfaction to the English and Scottish branches they had also given dissatisfaction and had created more discontent than had hitherto existed with the manner of its administration in Ireland. He could not agree with the hon. Member for Queen's County in regard to what he said they had done. Naturally the hon. Member was proud of his own bantling. He believed that those men had done their duty to the best of their ability, but when they found the hon. Member for Queen's County, who was a member of the Committee, and the hon. Member for Hoxton, who was also a member of the Committee, diametrically opposed to each other as to what the Report meant, it was high time that the House should see whether there was any real difference of opinion between the men who framed and presented the Report. That was a point to which the Postmaster-General ought to pay some attention and have that 'divergence of opinion set right if it existed. He was sorry to hear what the hon. Member for Queen's County had said with regard to the civil rights of the postal servants, and he regretted the action he had taken in regard to that matter. He knew there was no more kind-hearted man or one more interested in the welfare of the men employed in the Post Office than the hon. Member, but for anyone like him in the twentieth century to attempt to justify such action in the House and to argue that members of the postal service were not entitled to enjoy to the full their civil rights was taking up an attitude of which he felt sure the majority of the people of Ireland would not approve. It was already laid down that members of the Civil Service and the postal service were entitled to take part in public affairs by being members of boards of guardians and borough councils, but a distinction was drawn and for some reason or other which he could not understand they could not be members of county councils. If there was anything wrong in a Civil servant being a member of a county council, why should they not go the whole hog and disqualify them for borough councils and boards of guardians as well? But why should Civil servants be denied the rights to which every other citizen of the Empire was entitled? He thought on behalf of the postal servants in Ireland it was only right that he should give expression to that view and let it be known that the opinion of the hon. Member for Queen's County was not the opinion of the majority of the Members of the Irish Party. He wished to say a few words in reference to the manner in which the Irish portion of the evidence was dealt with by the Committee. He wished the House seriously to consider this point, because he had been informed that the witnesses from Ireland were summoned to London to place their grievances before the Committee. It was the intention of Parliament that it should be a free and open inquiry and that the grievances of the men should be placed before the Committee without their being in any way fettered. If he had been correctly informed the representatives of the men from Ireland were asked to put in their statements and then he understood they were invited into the parlour of the Chairman of the Hobhouse Committee where their statements were read over. Their evidence as set forth in the statements was considered by the Chairman of the Committee and his private secretary, and, although the men protested, a good deal of the evidence they wished to give was deleted. The complaint was that their statements of evidence were mutilated, and the men were told that if they did not give the evidence as it had been curtailed they would not be heard at all. The result was that the witnesses went home dissatisfied and consequently those who mutilated their evidence had to take the responsibility. He wished to know what right had any gentleman sitting in the position of chairman to take such a drastic step as to dictate to the men the class of evidence they were to give. Was it any wonder that there should be discontent when such a thing was done? The same thing might have been done with other witnesses, but he wished to state that that was not what Parliament set up this Committee for. They set up the Committee to see justice done between these men and the State, and he thought the men had a right to give their evidence in an untrammelled manner. That action naturally had produced intense dissatisfaction in Ireland, and from what he had heard in the debate the new classification had created a good deal of dissatisfaction in England. He did not think he could do better than quote to the House the opinion of the representatives of the men from their official organ as to the manner in which they had been treated and how far such action had tended to remove the men's difficulties in Ireland. A recent issue of the *Irish Postal and Telegraph Guardian* contained the following passage showing how the findings of the Committee had been received by the Irish postal staff—

> "The report had intensified discontent instead of allaying it and that the contemplated expenditure was simply a waste of public money, inasmuch as it would not bring an ounce of contentment into the public service. A most peculiar thing about the report was that it recommended large increases of salaries to the highly paid classes who had not agitated at all, while the lower grades who caused all the agitation got practically nothing. This certainly seemed strange, and it bears the interpretation that the Committee had in their minds the discouragement of agitation in the Post Office."

Anyone who knew how Civil servants in Ireland had to deal with matters of this kind would know what the effect of this would be. The men who put themselves forward as the spokesmen of their class were immediately penalised and would get no promotion, and were practically placed under a ban. He could come to no other conclusion than this, that the result of what had taken place in Ireland would be that those who had would get and those who had agitated would get nothing. If they were going to allow Civil servants of the Post Office to be treated in that manner Parliament would be neglecting its duty to a body of men who, no matter what their faults might be, were only endeavouring in a legitimate way to make the condition of their class such that they might be able to live in comfort. That was what the men's organisation was established for in Ireland, and he could well imagine, knowing how powerful their organisation was, that those in authority would get the idea that this action was intended as a blow to the organisation for forcing forward the many grievances under which they suffered. The men who would benefit under the new classification were, strange to say, the young men between twenty-one and twenty-two years of age. The object of that was apparently to show the young men that by ceasing to agitate they would be looked after. They would see what had been the result to the men above them. They would see that those who had agitated had been passed over and the young men had been looked after. He hoped that that was not a system which would find any support in the House. He was sure hon. Members desired rather to treat those who had shown devotion to the service liberally and not do anything to discourage them. He now came to a question which he felt sure would appeal to hon. Members. It was an old question which he had brought forward on several other occasions. What he referred to was a system that existed in the service in Ireland called the learners' system. Under that system many young men were induced to enter the postal service. They were mostly young lads of good character who had to be efficient in education and thoroughly respectable. Unfortunately in Ireland mothers and fathers thought that if they could possibly get their children into the Post Office or into some other respectable calling they would be all right for life. That was one of the greatest fallacies that fathers and mothers could entertain in Ireland, for they ought to bring up their children to be respectable and honest tradesmen. That would be much better for the country and much better for the children. What was the result of the present system? Parents spent any amount of money in educating their children up to passing the necessary examinations in order to bring them into the postal service, and what did they get? Only from 5s. to 6s. a week. In order to get their children into the postal service parents had to send their children to be educated in Dublin amidst all its temptations, and, therefore, there was very great temptation to go wrong under this system. It was sweating of the worst description, because they did not give a wage which would keep the boys respectable. He had brought this question before the House on many other occasions, but nothing had been done. The Postmaster-General in past years had expressed his sympathy upon the subject, and he now appealed to him that the time had come when something should be done to enable the boys who went into the postal service to obtain at least sufficient wage to keep them in comfort. Those boys were doing practically the work of men after the first three months, and consequently were filling men's places. Under those circumstances they ought to be paid a wage commensurate with the work they were doing. But bad as the Report of the Hobhouse Committee was, it was not proposed to carry out its recommendations. Many hon. Members had expressed their view with reference to the interpretation which had been placed upon the Committee's recommendations, and consequently it would be futile for him to weary the House by going further into that subject. Nearly every hon. Member who had spoken had called attention to the interpretation put upon the Report, and after what had been said upon all sides of the House he hoped the Postmaster-General would be able to adopt a more generous and liberal interpretation. Another question he desired to call attention to was the working hours of various postal staffs in Ireland. In Dublin they had a dual system and also the three-shift system. These were crying grievances against which the men had protested, and if he had read the Report of the Hobhouse Committee aright they had recognised that those systems should be done away with. No man should be compelled to work more than twelve hours in the twenty-four. If he was correctly informed, it was not unusual for a man to be kept working sixteen hours in the twenty-four. He was sure the Postmaster-General did not wish such a thing as that to continue, and he hoped the matter would have his serious consideration. He was given to understand that in the carrying out of the Report the whole desire of the permanent officials was to economise. Efficiency was not a consideration at all. He would be the last to say that economy should not be carried out, but he wanted economy with efficiency, and economy with justice. It was false economy to deny men that to which they were entitled and to enforce a system which partook of the character of compelling men to work at a wage and under conditions which the State never intended. His hon. friend the Member for Queen's County had called attention to the spirit of favouritism that existed in the postal service. He did not know whether it existed here, but he was confident from what he knew of the working of the postal service in Ireland that the spirit of favouritism was rampant there. They had been told by the Postmaster-General that efficiency and fitness were to be the essentials of promotion. He dared say that the Postmaster-General meant that, but he was sorry to say that so far as Ireland was concerned it was not efficiency and fitness which gave the passport to promotion. It was quite the reverse. He did not wish to bring in the religious question; it was unfortunate in Ireland that it was brought in. His hon. friend the Member for Queen's County had put the matter in all its glaring nakedness, and he was anxious to hear what the Postmaster-General had to say in reply. Let him state how the men in Ireland were treated. There was a vacancy recently in a Killarney postmastership. The rules of the service required that when vacancies occurred they should be made known, so that those who were eligible, or who thought themselves eligible, should have an opportunity of applying. That appointment was filled without notice being given to the members of the staff. How had that occurred? Was it any inducement to a man to take an interest in his work if he knew he was going to be a drudge all his life? What incentive had he to do his work in a proper spirit unless he had a prospect of promotion? Everyone liked to have his work recognised, and the Post Office servants were not any less human than others. They wished to be recognised when they gave loyal and dutiful service to the Post Office, and were fit and competent for positions to which they might be promoted. He represented the College Green Division of Dublin, and he knew almost every one of these men personally, and he would not stand there and ask that any man in the service, if he was not competent for a position, should be promoted. He would support the Postmaster-General if he would lay down the principle that those men were entitled, when vacancies occurred, so long as they were efficient and had ability to do the work, to attain the higher positions in the service. He asked the House to consider this. Could it be maintained that there was not something rotten in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and the other towns quoted by his hon. friend, when they found men of a certain persuasion promoted over the heads of others who belonged to the religion of the great bulk of the population? It was a reflection on the religion of the majority of the people of Ireland to think that there were not men among them competent to fill the higher positions, and it was the duty of every man who respected religious equality to see that there should be nothing in the shape of religious bigotry in connection with the promotion of the men. Catholics came over to this country and could get into any position. They had only to prove that they were fit and competent to fill them. It was a great blot on the history of this country that such a distinction, which had gone on for generations and had divided the Irish people so long, should still exist under the Postmastership of the right hon. Gentleman. He hoped it would not exist in future. But for the grievance which existed he would not have touched on religious matters. It was enough for him to know his own religion and go to Heaven the best way he could, but when this subject was forced on him he would be unworthy of his position in the House if he did not draw attention to the grievance which, he was sure, Englishmen would not tolerate or be parties to. It was only in Ireland that it could take place. There was no question in England as to a man's religion as it existed in Ireland. The heads of Departments in Ireland would do the best day's work they had ever done, if they said that a man's religion would be no bar to his advancement so long as he was efficient and able to fill the post.

The postmen in Ireland, like their brethren in this country, had many grievances. They were a class of men who were entitled to a great deal of consideration, and their position ought to be improved. Like the postal clerks, they had not been treated well. A few years ago, Dublin was placed in the same position as London in regard to salary. In 1899 the maximum given in Dublin to postal clerks was fixed at 56s. a week. They did the same work in Dublin as in London. Since then the London men had had their wages increased, and at the present moment the Dublin men were working for 9s. a week less than the London men. They had been discussing that night the question of the cost of living in relation to wages. Did any person who knew the City of Dublin not know that it was harder and dearer to live in Dublin than in London? He had himself lived in London for a great number of years, and he could state that a housewife's budget would go further in London than in Dublin. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why?] The price of the loaf in Dublin was 5½d., the same as in London. House-rent in Dublin was dear. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] He was speaking from actual facts. He knew as a working man that he paid £48 a year for his house in Dublin, and he was not a bit better housed than some of the postal servants. In estimating house rent in Dublin, he referred to the class of house in which the Postmaster-General was anxious to house the members of the postal service. He could hardly think that the right hon. Gentleman wished them to live in the slums of Dublin. As to the cost of provisions, oatmeal had increased from 12s. 9d. per cwt. in 1897 to 14s. 6d. in 1906. Potatoes had increased from 1s. 9d. a stone in 1897 to 2s. 10d. in 1906, beef had increased from 45s. 6d. per cwt. in 1897 to 50s. 6d. now. All that went to prove that the cost of living had increased, and yet there had been no commensurate increase in the wages of the men. Therefore he said that in Dublin the necessities of life compelled them to spend as much as in London. He appealed to the Postmaster-General to consider the grievance of the postmen in this matter. If he was rightly informed, one of the orders sent out in regard to the conferring of stripes had given dissatisfaction, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give sympathetic attention to that matter. Referring to the men who had been employed on the travelling service between Dublin and Queenstown as sorters on the mail trains, he said that the doing away with that service had removed from the men who were engaged in it all chance of promotion. They had to go back to the post office at a less wage than they had before. He was sure that the Postmaster-General would agree that that was a great grievance. Their positions had been abolished through no fault of their own, and they were entitled to some consideration for the loss which they had sustained through the abolition of the Queenstown service. He appealed to the Postmaster-General to do something for the men who had been engaged in that onerous and responsible work and who had been receiving higher pay for the duties they performed. They had to go to exceptional expense in carrying out their duties, and if they had now to go back to the post office with no hope of improvement that would not be a fair thing, and he was sure the Postmaster-General, having had his attention drawn to this matter, would give it his consideration.

*CAPTAIN MORRISON-BELL (Devonshire, Ashburton) said that the Postmaster-General admitted that there was a grievance, but that that was in the future, and would not affect the present employees. He submitted that that was a retrograde step. The mere fact that the Hobhouse Committee had been appointed at all was to improve the condition of the postmen from top to bottom, certainly from the bottom, and it seemed to him to be quite wrong that the Postmaster-General should now be considering any reduction of wages in the present or in the future. The scheme hit his constituents very hard. There were five large towns in his constituency; all of them were flourishing, and the work in them was increasing very largely. It was hard that in these towns in the future the postal servants would be worse off by 1s. a week.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Which towns?

CAPTAIN MORRISON-BELL: Teignmouth, Chudleigh, Bovey Tracey, Ashburton, Moretonhampstead. An hon. Member had stated that the tipping system among Post Office servants was entirely wrong, and that, therefore, tipping should be abolished and the postman's wages raised. He agreed, but it seemed to him that under the new scheme they were abolishing tipping, but were going to reduce wages in the future. In the principal town in his constituency, Newton Abbot, the employees were rated for units of work at 195, which placed them in Class 4; while Horsham, Sutton, Sevenoaks, and other places of a like character were placed in Class 3. The Committee had not worked out the cost of living in those towns compared with the cost of living in Newton Abbot.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said that in fixing the classification the recommendation of the Committee was that two elements had to be considered on which the pay of the men should be based, the units of work and the cost of living.

*CAPTAIN MORRISON-BELL said he could not help thinking that the cost of living in Newton Abbot was as high as in some of the places he had mentioned. And there was a feeling of injustice in this matter which the Postmaster-General must realise extended far beyond his constituency. He had only intervened in the debate to do his best to press the views of and to help a very large class of his constituents who, he was convinced, were only endeavouring to get what they considered was fair.

*MR. STUART (Sunderland) said that, in the first place, he wished to associate himself with the proposition advanced by the hon. Member for Bolton, that it was desirable that the accounts of the Post Office should be kept separate from the accounts of the general revenue and expenditure of the country. In the second place, he wished to associate himself with his colleague in the representation of Sunderland, who had explained the difficulties under which Sunderland laboured. No doubt there were other places which had similar difficulties; although they were extreme in the case of Sunderland. The cost of living in that town was practically identical with that in Newcastle, but the wages in Sunderland of the postal clerks were 8s. a week less than in Newcastle. As an old Member of the House, who had listened for twenty-five years to the debates on the Post Office, he thought that this debate was, on the whole, the most remarkable during the past quarter of a century. In the first place, there had been justly the unanimous expression from all quarters of the House of admiration for the devotion, ability, and sympathy of the Postmaster-General shown in the administration of his Department. There had been on all sides of the House a most complete approval of what was being done by the right hon. Gentleman in the way of expansion of the business during the past year. These were very remarkable features to one who had listened frequently to a different class of debate in the House. There had been only one topic upon which there was the same unanimity, but where fault had been found with the action of the right hon. Gentleman, and that was in connection with the Hobhouse Committee's Report. He had tried to form a conception of where the real difficulty lay, and he thought the Committee would bear him out that that had arisen from the fact that while they had a certain re-organisation of the wages of a great Department, and that re-organisation involved a large increase of wages, along with it there had come a certain number of decreases of wages of those who were to succeed the present occupants of office. The Committee, from beginning to end of the debate, had viewed with the greatest dissatisfaction the fact that there were to be lower salaries in certain parts of the country in respect of the Post Office servants than before; and that that should be attached to the general movement for the amelioration of the workers in the Post Office seemed to him to be the cause and origin of the dissatisfaction. An hon. Member on the Irish benches had said that it was not the case that tens of thousands of workers were to get worse wages than before, and then he gave the figures showing the large number who would be benefited and the small number who would be set back. That being the fact, it made the case all the worse for the few who were set back. The fundamental difficulty arose either from the Hobhouse Report or from the construction which had been put upon the Hobhouse Report by the advisers of the right hon. Gentleman. They, or the framers of the Report had acted in this matter in a way in which no business man would have acted. Any gentleman who was connected with the employment of a large number of men must know that it was a most serious thing to reduce the wages of the men in any Department who were to come after those at present engaged in it; and to do that along with a general rise of wages of the employees. It would be almost impossible for any private employer of labour to carry out what was proposed to be done in the Post Office. There was a certain amateurishness in the recommendations of the Hobhouse Report which had led that Committee to this wrong and altogether unbusinesslike transaction. He thought that the unanimity with which the Committee had spoken on every side—the large number of Members who had spoken, and the still larger number who desired to speak—in bringing forward the grievances of a vast multitude of people, must show the Postmaster-General that there was really in the Hobhouse Report, or the interpretation put upon it, something which must be altered. He wished to make an appeal to the Postmaster-General himself. The right hon. Gentleman had seen many people, he had seen the representatives of many constituencies about the various matters talked of that afternoon, and his own good sense, his own business sense, his own sympathy and desire to do what was right had led him in those cases, and also in cases which went outside the Hobhouse Report, to modify his position and to look at the facts from a reasonable point of view, from a business point of view, from an intelligent point of view, and not from the hard and fast line of a Report which was conceived on wrong lines. Under these circumstances he felt that they owed a great deal to the Postmaster-General for having got a little free from the bonds of the Hobhouse Report; but still, the right hon. Gentleman had involved himself in the network of that Report, and he should endeavour to get rid of it more and more. He hoped that in his reply the right hon. Gentleman would recognise the fact that he must now be bound not so much by that Report; that it must be modified in a general way or in particular instances. Perhaps it would be far better for his peace of mind if it should be modified in a general way so as to meet all the points brought forward. He wanted to add his testimony to the spirit in which the Postmaster-General had met the appeals which had been made to him.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central) said he wished to express his feelings about the question of classification, which frankly and honestly he felt very strongly in connection with his own constituency. He did not mean to say that in Bradford they were in a state of active discontent, but they were feeling a sort of depression and unhappiness in consequence of their being classified differently from all the other great towns. Of the seven very important towns of over 250,000 inhabitants in England, Bradford was the only one that was put down in Class II., the others all appearing in Class I. That was very peculiar, because Bradford was remarkable for the extremely high cost of living there. Working men in Bradford were at a very serious disadvantage indeed. If the cost of living were considered, and the high rents, it would be found that there was no place outside London, where the expenses of the working classes were so great. In spite of all this, Bradford was put down in a lower grade than any other big town. He would like to discuss the questions of units, of rent, and of special circumstances, besides the cost of living. As to the units of work, 1,475 was put down as the number, but it was contended with a good deal of force that this was altogether a mistake, and that the number was 1,600, and probably a good many more. But apart from that, certain units had not been added in at all; for instance, private box units amounted to eighty-two, and there were another sixty for the *Bradford Daily Observer* and *Daily Telegraph*, which numbers had not been considered at all. If all the numbers were put together fairly, honestly, and justly, they amounted to far above 1,600, which should qualify these people to go into the other class. Bradford fared badly in the matter of rent, and even that had not been properly stated in the Yellow-book issued by the Board of Trade, but was a good deal higher than from that Report it would appear. He felt sure that the Postmaster-General would give Bradford his careful and lenient consideration. The work at the telegraph department was of a very peculiar character, owing to the number of foreign telegrams which required special skill in manipulation. As to the postmen, they were in Bradford peculiarly situated. The Postmaster-General was in the town a short time ago, but he was afraid he did not walk about so much as a Parliamentary candidate had to do. Bradford was exceedingly hilly, and the streets were very steep and tiring. Besides that there was only one main post office, and no district post office, so that everything had to be despatched from the central post office, and taken out one to three miles. It could be well understood, therefore, that postmen had to pay from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a week in tram and train fares. He was certain the Postmaster-General would see the reasonableness of his contention, being extremely free from what might be called official rigidity, which in lesser men than Cabinet Ministers was known as obstinacy. He felt confident, therefore, that his appeal on behalf of the postmen of Bradford would not be made in vain.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central) said it was a few years since he had the privilege of speaking in that House on the Post Office Estimates. Most of the ground had already been covered by previous speakers, but there were one or two points that he wanted to bring under the notice of the Postmaster-General. He admitted that so far as his criticism was concerned, it was friendly. He had known the Postmaster-General for a number of years, and knew the work he had done outside the House on behalf of the Labour movement; he considered he was one of the best men, either Liberal or Tory, who had ever presided at the Post Office; and therefore he was not able to put any venom into his speech. He wanted to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to a circular which he issued on 29th June informing the mechanics employed at Mount Pleasant that as vacancies occurred in various trades now carried on by the Department the work was to be given out to private contract.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said he had not the least intention of sending work from Mount Pleasant to contractors. He had stated that his object was to keep the work there as far as he possibly could, but he wished to avoid taking on a large number of men and afterwards have to get rid of them. He did not know what the hon. Member was alluding to.

MR. STEADMAN said he was alluding to a circular which, he understood from the men employed, bore the right hon. Gentleman's signature and had caused a lot of consternation there.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said there was absolutely no foundation for the statement, and that was the first he had heard of it. He would have thought that if the men themselves thought he was going to take action of that sort they would have made representations to him. It was rather hard on the head of the Department when those in the service, instead of coming directly to him and laying their grievances before him—and he had expressed himself willing to hear them—should go to Members and apparently misrepresent matters. He was not blaming his hon. friend—he was perfectly entitled to bring the matter forward—but the misunderstanding probably arose in this way. One of these circulars in regard to what were called non-established mechanics, stated that vacancies were to be provided for by contract. It referred only to two mechanics who were repairing letter-boxes. That was the only foundation whatever for the statement.

MR. STEADMAN said he accepted the right hon. Gentleman's explanation and he was very pleased to have raised the point, because, personally, he felt very strongly upon it, and it had given him an opportunity of clearing it up, and he was sure it would satisfy those interested. His reason for feeling strongly upon it was that at the time of the general election he addressed these men in the dinner hour at the gates of the factory, and he strongly condemned the action of the late Government because they had sent contracts away from the Department whilst their men were working three-quarter time, and these men of course looked to him to be consistent. That was his object, and it had been achieved in raising the point. A matter which had been referred to two or three times was the difference between the salary paid in Lombard Street and that paid in Threadneedle Street. It was a point that wanted clearing up. He was a mechanic, a barge-builder, by trade, and it did not matter to him what portion of the river he was employd upon, he wanted his money as fixed by the trade union, and he would not work without it, and if the working classes were of his spirit they would not be working for the low rates of wages they were employed for to-day. It was very strange that there should be a difference in the price, and, as the Postmaster-General in reply to the hon. Member for Hoxton blamed the Committee for it, the Chairman of the Committee ought to give an explanation why the difference existed. There was one other point dealing with the sorters. He would refer to their hours of labour without going into the question of their wages. They were supposed to work forty-eight hours per week. That looked very reasonable, but in the first portion of the week they were rather slack, and hours were crammed in the last two days in order to bring them up to forty-eight in the week. This was what happened: A man went on night-duty at five o'clock on Friday afternoon and was on duty till five o'clock the next morning. That was twelve hours continuously. He then went home, but he had to be back on duty at five o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and to work all night again in order to bring his hours up to forty-eight. It was a matter of administration. He spoke feelingly on the point, because he had worked all night himself and he knew how one felt the next day. The men were confined in a building and their brains were taxed for twelve hours. There was a very great amount of strain upon them, and it was no wonder if some of them were driven into asylums. It was, he considered, more a matter of administration than anything else. He did not want to overburden the Postmaster-General, because he knew he was doing a lot; but he hoped he would look into the matter and see if some alteration could not be made. He smiled when listening to the pertinent remarks of the hon. Member for Bolton. He spoke on the subject of the law of supply and demand in the labour market. He had heard the argument used in the House till he was tired of it. If a man had only 18s. per week, it was idle for a Government official to tell him that there were thousands and thousands ready to take his place, though unfortunately it was true and showed the state of the labour market. He would challenge any Member to get up and tell them what he considered a living wage or a standard of living. Was it imagined that if a man got 30s. per week that was a standard of living? He considered it very far from being so. He preached the gospel of discontent outside. He said that the best was made by labour and labour had a right to enjoy the best. Heaven knew how a man with a wife and family lived on £1 or 18s. per week, for he did not. He was not satisfied with his living on a mechanic's wage and he was always in regular work. Why should he not have a standard of living as well as anybody else? Why should the economic conditions of the country allow one man to become a millionaire and another a pauper? He felt for those on the lower rung of the ladder. Under the instructions of the last Trade Union Congress, held at Bath, he gave a notice of motion calling for a minimum in the London district of 30s. per week. That was low enough in all respects, and it did not follow that if a man received it he would have a fair standard of living. As a matter of fact, a man's standard of living was regulated by the purchasing power of his wages. Hon. Members smiled, but it was no smiling matter to him, for he had gone through the mill, and it was no smiling matter to the millions outside, eating out lives of semi-starvation on low wages. This was a problem which every social reformer had to face. He wished to call attention to the case of the postal porters. He went to see a man at Mount Pleasant. He had 25s. per week; and he, his wife, and three or four children were living in two rooms, in a narrow thoroughfare, for which they had to pay 8s. per week. What standard of living was he enjoying? His wife and children ought to have the same air space as the wife and children of the millionaire in Park Lane. Humanity was equal. One man was as good as another so long as they obeyed the laws of the country. These low wages were the cause of overcrowding and of physical deterioration. He desired to say a few words on the subject of promotion. It seemed to him that the middle and upper classes imagined that the Civil Service was established for their sons, and their sons only. A great deal of caste existed in the Civil Service, and he was sorry to say it was spreading to other Departments. The London County Council, which was a large employer of labour, had tightened up its examination to such an extent that it was impossible for the son of a workman to secure an appointment. The examination was not necessary for the duties that had to be performed. The middle and upper classes had not all the brains, and in his judgment the Civil Service should be opened to merit and not to a certain class. It did not follow that because a man had received a University education he knew everything, or that he was a better man than anybody else. He knew that the Postmaster-General, fifteen years ago, fought hard to secure the humble docker 6d. per hour, but there were men in the Post Office who were being paid 4½d. per hour. These were the messenger boys. If they had the merit and the ability to go in for the higher grades they ought to stand on an equality with the rest. They might say what they liked about the Hobhouse Committee's Report, but the service was seething with discontent at the present time, and he did not wonder at it. Men were passed over, not by better men, but because he supposed those men considered themselves "class." He was certain there would be more satisfaction if, when a man entered the Department, he knew that if he had the ability the time would come sooner or later when he could attain a higher position. The Department should not be under the control of one man. He was bound to be at the mercy, to some extent, of the permanent officials, for the Post Office was, after all, an administrative and not a legislative body. He did not agree with the hon. Member for Plymouth, who said that it should be managed by an independent committee. Every Member in the House had a right to say what wages he considered should be paid by any Government Department, and he had no opportunity of voicing his opinion except on occasions like the present. If they wanted the men to perform their duties in an honest and manly spirit, they must encourage them to take a certain amount of pride and satisfaction in their conditions of labour. These men had not that independence. When once they went out of the Post Office they had to walk the streets and swell the ranks of the unemployed. They could only bring content into the Department by electing a Committee of Members, of which the Postmaster-General could be the head, to hear their complaints week-in and week-out, the same as he had the opportunity of doing for fifteen years when a member at Spring Gardens. If that was done it would save a lot of time now occupied by private Members, and it would bring more content in the postal service than existed at present.

MR. McCALLUM (Paisley) said that as Ireland had spoken in two voices and England had been speaking all the afternoon, perhaps the Committee would bear with Scotland for three and a half minutes. They were naturally slow of speech and a long-suffering people and they hesitated to intervene in the debates. He desired to join with hon. Members who had spoken of the Postmaster-General in such laudatory terms. His speech was able, humorous, pathetic, kindly, and a vein of human sympathy ran through it. He had shown considerable resource and ingenuity, and had given real evidence of marked ability in his administration. It was right, therefore, that they should mention frankly that there were a few mistakes that they desired to see remedied. So far as Scotland was concerned, they had reason to be proud of his administration. Many of them who had gone to him for redress had found that he had been fair in his decision, although they had not got all they wanted. They had scarcely been fair in admitting that while the wage, particularly to start with, was not a living wage, the service gave other advantages that private enterprise could not possibly give. If they did their work well, if they showed ability and were determined to advance, there was a clear line of promotion before them. Then there was a pension at the end of their days. Looking at it from that point of view, it should not be maintained that the wage should be higher than was paid outside. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had made a slight mistake in the West of Scotland. The constituency that he represented was not far from Glasgow, and it cost just as much to live there as it did in Glasgow, yet those who entered the service there received less remuneration. He would like the right hon. Gentleman to look into that case, and, if possible, have it remedied. The town was not poor, the wages in the locality were quite as high as in Glasgow, and a great deal of the work done in Paisley naturally found its way into Glasgow. On that account Paisley had a special claim to be classified in the same way.

*MR. C. E. SHAW (Stafford), as a trader and one of the mercantile community, added his praise to the Postmaster-General for the postal reforms which he had carried into effect, more especially those with regard to the Colonies, the far-reaching effects of which would not be fully felt for some time to come. As a Liberal he was grateful also to the Postmaster-General for having seen his way clear to recognise trade unionism and collective bargaining in the Post Office, and was glad it had been carried through without any detriment to the Post Office organisation and work, generally speaking. He, however, expressed profound regret that the Committee's recommendations and the way they had been carried into effect had not effected a settlement of the question. From the point of view of the postal service it was well that a great service should be contented, and it certainly added very greatly to the burden of the life of a Member of that House that a great service should be discontented, because it meant that they had to undertake to voice that discontent and to make very searching inquiries in connection therewith. It was also decidedly detrimental from the public point of view. The public simply read in the Press, and from the statement of the Postmaster-General, that something like £500,000 more money had been devoted to the benefit of the great postal service, and, therefore, they were unable to understand why, when this great sum of money had been devoted to the bettering of the service, it should still be discontented. The service was still discontented because the Department had placed an arbitrary interpretation on the Committee's Report and recommendations. He had interviewed several members of the Committee which issued the Hobhouse Report, and one and all had expressed their belief that the Committee when issuing their Report did not mean that any wages should be diminished. Only one member of the Committee, he believed, had spoken, and while he defended the findings of the Committee generally, when he came to deal with his own constituents he found fault with any diminution of the wage, and indeed with the maintenance of the standard wage which had prevailed. It had been said that they had in many other Departments been suffering from Judge-made law. In this case the Post Office was suffering from Departmental-made classification. The Post Office servants with whom he had been brought into contact contended rightly that the men already in the service and of long standing should benefit to the full extent of the Report and not merely those entering from this date on. He had interviewed a gentleman who pointed out that the maximum which he could reach would take him twenty years to attain, though a new entrant would achieve it in fifteen years. He certainly believed old servants should always have a preference and at any rate should not be treated worse than new entrants. With regard to this much debated question of classification, the method to those who had not technical knowledge was extremely difficult to understand, and he failed to see the relation which the units of work bore to the cost of living. He had read and re-read the Memorandum issued by the Postmaster-General, and had added and subtracted figures in vain. If the unit of work was the major factor in deciding the classification, that was entirely wrong. The strain of work was not very great in difference as between the various offices, because if there was more work the number of officers was increased and the labour was distributed among a greater number of men. It was the cost of living that ought rather to govern the situation and not the unit of work. If they ruled out London, the cost of living did not differ very materially in various parts of the Kingdom—at any rate not so much as to justify the difference between a 40s. and a 56s. maximum. If 56s. was a fair maximum it was apparent that a great injustice was done to the 40s. man. It was bad where no increase had been made, and where things were left as they were, but what about places where an absolute decrease had been announced? For years he had contended that Stafford should have a certain maximum, and at last he achieved it, but now it had been taken away. Stafford's maximum was 50s. It had now been reduced to 48s. Had the cost of living decreased, and would the wage of the new entrants be sufficient to maintain decency of living? Such would not be the case, because 50s. by no means met the necessities of the case. He had gone into this matter at considerable length, and he would give to the House the budget of a poor family of five persons in the borough of Stafford, the head of which was a postal servant. He made his calculation upon prices supplied by tradesmen in the borough, and he had taken 25s. a week which was the maximum figure allowed according to the new classification of the postal department. He had not taken one postman but twenty-four, and he found that twelve of them paid for a six-roomed house from 6s. to 6s. 6d. per week; ten of them paid in rent from 5s. to 5s. 9d. per week, and two of them paid 4s. per week for a four-roomed house. The mean average of those twenty-four postmen for rental was 5s. 7d. and to that had to be added 9d. for rates making the total for rent and rates 6s. 4d. And now as to the cost of living. He would not go through all the items that he had compiled, which included such things as bread, sugar, tea, butter, bacon, jam, flour, fish, potatoes, eggs. He had taken each article carefully and compiled the budgets in each case. The sum total taken upon a very low basis amounted to no less than £1 0s. 3½d. as the cost of living. If they took the cost of coal, firewood and other things at 2s. 6d. they would find that with the rent the average budget amounted to £1 9s. 1½d. a week. An hon. Member representing a Scottish constituency had stated that he was satisfied with the conditions of the Postal Service even although it did not always afford a living wage, but he was a long way from being satisfied with it when postmen in the borough of Stafford were only going to receive a maximum of 25s. a week. This was far more serious in view of the fact that the postmen's budget, compiled upon the most meagre basis, totalled £1 9s. 1½d. He thought it was time that the postmen's pay should be amended and increased, in the interests of the department itself as well as in the interests of the nation generally. He challenged any hon. Member to contradict the figures he had given, which made no provision for sickness, insurance, and numerous other calls which were sure to be made upon a careful and thrifty family. Could it be wondered at that under those circumstances his constituents were profoundly disappointed with the result of the Committee's recommendations, which, when translated as to their practical effect, meant the cutting down of the maximum wage by 1s. and 2s. per week in Stafford? The conditions under which the Stafford postmen performed their work was specially onerous having regard to the fact that Stafford was a great mail centre and nearly the whole of the work was night work. This entitled some of the employees to at least 52s. per week instead of being cut down from 50s. to 48s. per week. A great deal had been said about the £600,000 which was going be provided for increased pay to the men. He wished to tell the Committee that Stafford's share of that £600,000 was that a superintendent getting over £200 per annum would have a rise of £5 a year given to him and an inspector and assistant-inspector would have rises of £25 and £15 a year respectively. Those men who had had their salaries increased never asked for a Committee to inquire into their conditions of service at all, and they were not, generally speaking, dissatisfied. Those men had had their salaries increased whilst the wages of future clerks and postmen were going to be reduced. This was taking place in spite of the fact that postal duties were increasing and the work was becoming more and more onerous. All those postal reforms of which the Postmaster-General had spoken, and for inaugurating which they were very grateful to him, would increase the work and responsibility of the postal service. He had recently been talking to a postman about this matter, and he called attention to the enormous increase of his work as a result of the extension of the book-post to Canada. Then there was the penny post to the United States which would also bring more work, and the increase in the sale of postal orders would also throw more responsibility upon individual postmen. He associated himself heartily with the hon. Member for the Ince division, whose speech he specially admired, with regard to the point he made as to the State not being in the right when it endeavoured to cut down rather than to raise the wages of any large class employed in this country. Undoubtedly the State ought to be a model employer of labour and ought to level up wages and not level them down. He failed to understand how it had come about that Stafford had been relegated to the third class. He found upon looking at the figures that in the Memorandum which had been issued by the Postmaster-General, Stafford was put down in the third class. He noticed that a blank had been left in the space which dealt with the cost of living. He trusted that that meant that the Postmaster-General's decision was not final with regard to Stafford. He noticed that in the case of Birkenhead a blank was also left under the cost of living.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Yes, that means that it is a special case.

MR. C. E. SHAW said he hoped that Stafford would be treated as a special case. He was encouraged to believe that that would be the case, because he noticed that in the prefatory Memorandum to the figures it was stated that offices were not to be put up or down in class unless the cost of living differed considerably from the average. Generally speaking, the benefit of the doubt had been given in moving an office up in the class and not reducing it. He claimed that Stafford should occupy a better class than it did having regard to the night work which fell with such weight on the employees. He felt that a better wage which was earned after many years of agitation ought not to be taken away from those men as the outcome of the recommendations of the Committee. This was all the more unjust because in his humble opinion, after having heard the opinions of some Members of that Committee, it was never intended that their recommendations should result in a diminution of the maximum wage but rather in a levelling up of wages throughout the country.

*MR. ANNAN BRYCE (Inverness Burghs) said it was not clear from the Report of the Hobhouse Committee what was its intention with regard to the future position of the existing members of the sub-engineer class. It was, however, quite evident from the wording of the circular of the right hon. Gentleman that he did not intend to apply to existing members the recommendation of the Hobhouse Committee with regard to future members of the class. That left those people who well deserved promotion under the old system in a very unfortunate position, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would indicate in his reply some method of getting over the difficulty which existed in relation to them. He did not believe there was any class of the postal service who performed harder work than the sub-engineers. Many of them had to work hours ranging from seventy to eighty and ninety in the week, and after several years of that kind of labour it would be very hard if they did not receive the promotion to which they were fully entitled.

*MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) said the Postmaster-General had been extremely courteous in replying to the communications he had addressed to him in regard to the constituency he represented, and he did not propose to bring the matter before the Committee, but he would like to hear from the right hon. Gentleman how he arrived at the cost of living in the various constituencies. From the interesting speech just delivered by the hon. Member for Stafford, it was perfectly plain that if the cost of rent was from 6s. to 6s. 6d. per week on the average the cost of living must be high, because in those districts food would not be particularly cheap, and in spite of this Stafford was placed in the third class. As far as other constituencies were concerned it was clear that there was a strong feeling in the House that the present position was far from satisfactory. As far as his own constituency was concerned the maximum rate had been reduced, and this had produced a considerable amount of dissatisfaction. In York the standard was much higher although the cost of living was very much the same. He wished to ask the Postmaster-General if he would say exactly how he arrived at his calculation in regard to units of work and the cost of living in the various constituencies.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said that in view of the enormous amount of criticism which had been passed upon the Committee of which he was unfortunately a Member, he wished to say a word or two. He particularly wished to reply to the statement made by one of the hon. Members for Dublin, to the effect that in the case of witnesses fetched from Ireland, their evidence was mutilated and never placed before the Committee. He did not think the hon. Member for Dublin could have been properly informed upon that subject. The Committee discovered that some of the evidence of those witnesses was of the most peculiar character, raising points that were of no importance at all, although some of the witnesses thought they were important. It was decided that the Chairman, with the assistance of the secretary, should look over certain statements proposed to be put before the Committee in the form of evidence. It was for that reason that certain matters, not touched upon in the evidence as printed, were never placed before the Committee officially, the matters referred to being utterly purposeless for the objects for which the Committee was appointed; so that the whole of the evidence which the witnesses wished to be presented was unquestionably placed before the Committee before a decision was arrived at in regard to it. To-day he had been delighted with the laudation of the Postmaster-General, but there had been a tendency to praise the right hon. Gentleman at the expense of the Committee. That was unfortunate, because it placed the Committee in the position that they were bound to defend themselves and their Report. He was there to stand up for the Committee from beginning to end. It had been stated that he did not sign the Report, but simply agreed to it. In spite of what the hon. Member for Stockport had said, he did not see the difference between agreeing to the Report and signing it. While he wished to get a broad and fair interpretation of the recommendations of the Committee, at the same time he stood with his colleagues in reference to the Report. There was one point in reference to the classification which he insisted upon, in spite of the hope which the hon. Member for Sunderland had expressed that the Postmaster-General would throw the Report of the Select Committee, so far as classification was concerned, into the wastepaper basket. With reference to classification, there were two principles on which the Committee decided to go. The first was the cost of living. Had that been properly applied? He was only able to speak with reference to the localities where he had made personal inquiries, and he was most certainly of opinion that the method by which the Department had sought to arrive at a conclusion as to the cost of living was utterly fallacious. It so happened that, either by accident or design, a list of streets in a town adjoining his own constituency had fallen into his hands. It showed the mode by which in the district selected the representatives of the Board of Trade found out the average rent in that particular locality. About fifty-two streets were selected, and except in the case of four or five streets, one would describe the district as one of the worst slum areas in the place. It was a district in which there were tumble down houses where rents of 3s. a week were charged. Was that carrying out the letter of the Department of 7th September, 1905, asking that only those localities should be taken into consideration when collecting information where it would be regarded as perfectly proper for postal servants to reside? So far as the locality to which he referred was concerned, he was positive that if the Postmaster-General only saw some of the houses, some of the streets, some of the courts, and some of the alleys selected for the purpose of getting at the proper average rent, he would either discharge the postal servant who lived there, or make him remove to another locality. It was not fair to denounce the findings of the Committee until they had been properly applied. In this case they had not been properly applied. The whole debate had rested on the question of classification, although there were a hundred and one other things dealt with in the Report. He wished to refer to the matter of the lowering of *status*. It was said that no officers were to be reduced. The Department might give two interpretations to that. They might say that the Committee reported that no officers were to be lowered in *status*, or that no officers in particular districts were to be lowered, which might mean that, whatever the classification might do as to the raising of *status*, none should be lowered below the position in which they were before. That interpretation might be applied perfectly reasonably and properly. As a member of the Committee he was not prepared to say what the majority of the Committee thought on that point. So far as he was concerned, he took it that nobody's wages would be reduced, and that the *status* of no district would be reduced. He was only speaking for himself with respect to that. Others might have thought something entirely different. With reference to the second point, they were told that the cost of living should be the only principle for deciding the standard of a locality. That would be grossly unfair, as hon. Members would discover if they inquired into the peculiar circumstances of some localities. The Committee recommended as a safeguard that the volume of work in particular districts should be taken into consideration. If they inquired into the whole postal organisation from one end of the country to the other, he thought that that recommendation if applied would remove almost every one of the grievances which had been referred to. Had the Department carried out the recommendation of the Committee with reference to the volume of work in localities? The right hon. Gentleman said he had. He knew that the right hon. Gentleman had not carried out the intention he had when he made the recommendation. The Committee took it for granted that the volume of postal work in a particular locality would almost exclusively decide the importance of a district as a postal area. They thought that the whole of the work of the district would be calculated to find out what was the *status* of the district in the organisation of the Post Office. What had been done? In his own locality, for example, which included three or four sub-offices, every form of employment, except the actual work which a servant would perform, was excluded from the classification. The consequence was that the classification did not settle itself according to the volume of work, but according to the particular kind of organisation in it. If it was done by the sub-agent it did not count; but if done directly by the Department it did. That was grossly unfair. Some of the chief offices in his locality and in the surrounding locality were utterly excluded from the calculation as to the volume of the work done in the district. That was not carrying out the recommendations of the Committee. In the case of Shrewsbury the opposite was the case; for instead of excluding anything from Shrewsbury it included seven or eight officers who were sent as far as Darlington in the North for the purpose of sorting all the letters, and to somewhere in South Wales, in the South and West, so that Shrewsbury was given the highest possible *status* in the scale. He said that that was grossly unfair under the circumstances. He had asked for an explanation, but none which was satisfactory had been given; at least none more satisfactory than that the surveyor who arranged those affairs resided in Shrewsbury. The most important thing in applying this principle was that the wages depended upon it; and unless that was attended to they could not prevent disturbance and difficulties being put in the way of the Department. He asked the Postmaster-General to reconsider the arrangements already arrived at with reference to classification; and to consider whether it was advisable to lower the *status* of any district when it was not the intention of a single member of the Committee that any district should be lowered.

*SIR A. SPICER (Hackney, Central) said he wished to ask the Postmaster-General's kindly consideration of two questions in connection with stripes. The Hobhouse Committee reported that the stripe system should be revised, and that the first stripe should be given after five years service; and another stripe for each succeeding four years service. The Postmaster-General had accepted that recommendation, and it was agreed that the new system of four years probation from the receipt of the second stripe should date from the last one. That was a great advance, but it led to certain anomalies, and that in some cases faithful service in the past times was less rewarded than faithful service in recent times. The Hobhouse Committee recommended that on occasion of any offence sufficiently grave to deprive a man of a stripe, a period should be fixed. It was necessary that there should be some time-limit and it had been fixed at ten years. That meant, however, perpetual punishment for all offences that had taken place more than ten years ago. He asked the Postmaster-General's consideration of these two points.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, in replying on the debate, said that in the first place the Committee would, he hoped, allow him to say how very much he was indebted to hon. Members on both sides of the House for their kindly references to himself personally and also from the point of view of his administration. One or two of the speakers had, as he thought, endeavoured to discriminate in those matters between the Postmaster-General and those who served with him in the Department. He wanted to say that, having regard to all matters discussed that evening, the officers in his Department had given him the greatest possible support. They had worked together harmoniously, and he deprecated any distinction being drawn between the Postmaster-General and those who were associated with him. He thought it would be more convenient in his reply if he took up first some of the minor points raised by hon. Members. He could assure the hon. Member for Finsbury that the Post Office were not disestablishing any work they had now under their control, and were not proposing to go to contractors for the execution of work which was done by the Post Office at the present time. Some reference had been made to the Circular issued by the Department and the displacement of two painters in London and two mechanics in Glasgow. It was the remnant of an old charge, and it was thought that all the rest of that work was being done by contractors. It was really better while organising the system to get rid not of individuals but the system and have all the work done by the Department. But that was not the position. There was no wish to disestablish any work under the control of the Department. The hon. Member had mentioned another class which he thought was put in a worse position by the recommendations of the Committee—the auxiliary officers. He did not think that was so as a matter of fact. He thought the scale had been increased, but in every case the auxiliary officer had the option of keeping on at the old scale or of coming under the new; so there could be no question of their being in a worse position than before. There was no intention, as had been suggested by the hon. Member, of reducing their wages; the pay in London was still to be 6d. and not 4½d., as suggested. It was true the hours of the sorters were arduous and long and the conditions unhealthy, but the Department were trying to reduce the hours and to make the conditions of work as healthy and as convenient to the staff as possible. It must, however, be understood that in a question of this sort and a Department of this kind they did not keep regular hours and it was not always possible to improve the hours of the sorters. When the Daylight Bill became law they might be able to do something of the sort. The hon. Member for Islington had raised several questions. The trip allowances had been improved under the recommendations of the Committee, but as to the porters he did not think it would be possible to re-try the whole case tried by the Committee, and go beyond its recommendations, which were very precise. With regard to the telephone men, he rejoiced to say that, although there had been a long delay, these men were being brought on to the establishment. When one had two public Departments to deal with in these matters as he had they did not get on so quickly as one would like. The question of the sub-engineers was a somewhat complicated one, but he would have an opportunity in the holidays of meeting the society, and that was one of the matters he had to discuss with them. With regard to the question of the sub-postmasters and the commission they received on the sale of postal orders, there again he was to meet them and discuss the matter, and he hoped to come to a friendly arrangement. With regard to auxiliary labour in a Department of this character they ought to do with as little as possible, but it was not possible to get rid of it altogether under the present conditions, although his desire was to reduce it to the lowest possible extent. With regard to the carmen, to the underpayment of whom attention had been drawn, arrangements were being made which would prevent all that. In all new contracts he was inserting a new clause with that object. With regard to the assistants, the Committee recommended that in future the period in which these postmen were to qualify for their stripe should after the first stripe be reduced from five years to four. The Committee did not propose that that should be retrospective, but he had appealed to the Treasury to make it retrospective in the sense that it should date from the period when the man got his last stripe. This would, no doubt, create an anomaly, but he thought these men would rather have an anomaly with a considerable amount of cash than have neither anomaly nor cash. He must confess that he occasionally felt that he was not met in the way he should be in some of these matters. They had had a very interesting and significant discussion, chiefly with regard to classification. If a stranger knowing nothing of the matter had come into the House and listened to the debate he would probably have thought that the Postmaster-General had put down the wages of every existing and future postman. But if they took the case of the offices and sub-offices, as a whole, under the proposals of the Committee as modified and revised by himself with the assistance of the Treasury, the Committee would see that there would be an increase in the postmen's wages in 4,800 cases, and the diminutions had been only 750 in all. In the offices in London there were only five in which reductions had taken place. So that, taking the postmen as a whole, there was a very great improvement in their conditions. In this matter he thought the Committee intended that they should be taken as a whole and not individual cases. One hon. Member had said he was there to-day to have bricks thrown at his head. He certainly had had cartloads thrown at him. He thought a few of them might come to his assistance. "Were there not ten, and where are the nine?" He really thought he might have had a little support, and he hoped in the division lobby, if they came to a division, he might receive practical support. If anybody had been listening to the debate, they would not have been made aware that there had been such a thing as a Parliamentary Committee sitting on this very question, a Committee appointed by the House and representative of all Parties, a Committee which came, if not absolutely—because no member submitted to everything—substantially unanimously to the conclusions, suggestions, and proposals embodied in the Report with regard to classification. He had, as he had said, considerably modified it at a very considerable additional cost, and he was obliged to the Treasury for the sum they had placed at his disposal in order to do it. What did the Committee recommend in regard to the question of classification? They said, and said specifically, that the classification of towns in future was to be made in two ways. There were at the present moment two divergent systems of classification, one dealing with the indoor force and the other with the outdoor force. They said the classes in the indoor force were to be reduced from seven to five, and that the outdoor force was to be classified on the lines of the posting clerks and telegraphists. The unified classification was to be based on two factors; first on the volume of work, and secondly on the cost of living where it was sufficient to modify the unit of work. That was the specific recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee, and he thought it was a very sensible one. He had been asked by one or two Members what constituted the unit of work, and how the Committee's recommendation was arrived at. He thought the hon. Member for Stoke had been somewhat misinformed as to the basis of the system of the unit of work and as to how it was carried out in the Department. The Committee took the system as it was carried out before they sat and recommended that it should be one of the bases of the classification.

MR. JOHN WARD said he would like the right hon. Gentleman to look at Paragraph 258. The Committee recommended that any resulting classification should be based upon the volume of work in the locality.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said that of course by unit of work he meant volume of work. That was to be one basis, and the other was the cost of living. He did not think there was any difference between them in that matter. The hon. Member had mentioned his own district, and said that the work done at the sub-offices there was not calculated in the volume of work. He did not know whether he had seen the details. A considerable volume of work was allowed for every sub-office; all the letters posted and delivered throughout the area, whether they went through the sub-offices or not, were brought into account. He could assure the House that all the items of work which went to form the volume of business in a particular locality were taken into account and calculated in the classification of the various towns. He was not in any way responsible for the estimated cost of living. Naturally, he was not able to arrive at any conclusion as to whether one town was dear and another cheap. They had had somewhat interesting domestic details as to the cost of living in different towns, and especially in Stafford. Of course, he was not in a position to judge whether Stafford, Wigan, and Dudley were dear or cheap places to live in. One would have to go and live there himself in order to be able to say. The Committee recommended that the Board of Trade system of arriving at the cost of living should be extended to other towns, and that they should base their classification on that. The Board of Trade, who were perfectly impartial and had no prejudice, had supplied them with the figures. They did not know whether Shrewsbury was a Tory or a Liberal town. His hon. friend seemed to think that Shrewsbury, as a Tory town, had been specially privileged. Well, sometimes it was worth conciliating one's enemies. The Board of Trade provided the figures, but, like the Postmaster-General, they did not consider themselves infallible. He did not consider himself infallible with regard to the classification, and he was open to argument with regard to any particular town. The Board of Trade were also open to argument, and if a *primâ facie* case could be made out, they would be prepared to reconsider their decision in any instance. If they came to a different conclusion, and made a material alteration in their figures, that would necessarily affect the classification of any town. Speaking on behalf of the Treasury, he would be glad if any hon. Member would endeavour to show that the cost of living in any place was put too high. They might then reconsider that case and reduce it. He would then be able to save some money. Everybody would appreciate that he had been at an enormous amount of trouble and labour, and, speaking seriously, he had accepted the general basis of the proposals of the Committee, modified very considerably in favour of the postmen, and he had honestly endeavoured to carry out the classification to the best of his ability. He believed it a fair and just basis. It was quite obvious that by starting with two divergent classifications and unifying them, a certain number of places must be adversely affected, but he was glad to think that the vast majority would be advantaged. The Committee themselves fully recognised that that would be the case, because they said in Paragraph 260 of the Report—

> "Your Committee recognises that the position in these classes of each individual town or district may be considerably affected as the result of the inquiry above referred to by the Board of Trade."

Therefore, it was quite obvious that they themselves believed there must be a certain amount of alteration in the position of the towns in a reclassification. He had endeavoured to minimise it as far as possible and to modify it as far as he could in favour of postmen and to reduce as few towns as possible. Of course, they all sympathised with those places in which in the future the maximum would have to be reduced; but he must repeat that it did not affect a single existing postman but only future entrants, and even there he sympathised with those places in which this classification might result in a reduction. All he could say in regard to it was that they had tried to minimise it as far as they could. As regarded individual towns, either in regard to units of work or the ordinary volume of work, if it increased so as to improve the classification, and also as regarded the cost of living and the other elements, if serious facts could be brought to his attention, he would certainly present them to the Board of Trade, who were perfectly willing to reconsider any decisions they had come to in regard to the cost of living if they had really material facts. They were still inquiring in a considerable number of places for the first classification and there were other places which would have to be inquired into, and he must ask the Committee in regard to any individual case they brought before him to understand that they must carry out, before they could reconsider these cases, the classification which they at present had in hand—he meant the inquiry into the cost of living by the Board of Trade. Subject to that, he frankly said to the House that he had proposed this classification on the lines of the Committee believing it to be a fair classification, and as a general framework he adhered to it. But as regarded any individual case, he was perfectly open to consider the position either from the point of view of the volume of work or of the cost of living. He asked the House to look at the matter as a whole and not to think quite so much about their constituents as about thepostal service.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton) was sure every Member of the House had heard with pleasure the efforts that the right hon. Gentleman had made on behalf of the postal employees; he was glad to be able to express the thanks of a large number of men who had benefited by his attention, and he hoped and believed he would not slacken his zeal on behalf of those who still had a perfect right to have their wages increased and their hours reduced. They were also thankful that he had increased the wages of the typists in the various offices. It secured to many of the women a living wage. Did that advantage apply to all centres as well as London where typists were engaged? He also wanted the right hon. Gentleman to clear the mind of the Committee with reference to another question—the position of members of the postal service who belonged to the Territorials. There was an idea abroad, though it had been denied by the Minister for War, that those who had been engaged in the postal service and belonged to the Territorial Army, when on duty in that connection, had to make up the difference when persons in receipt of a higher wage were put in their place. Finally, he would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman when going into the merits or demerits of the classification scheme, where no inquiry had been made, that he would stay his hand.

He was credibly informed that there were 120 offices where no inquiry had taken place, and they were already threatened with a reduction from the maximum of 1s. per week. It was only fair, whether classification was right or wrong, that where there had been no inquiry there should be no threatened reduction until an inquiry had taken place.

*MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) pointed out that when rural postmen could live in the country and get a cottage with a garden, fruit trees, and pig-sty included, for about £5 a year, they could manage to live in moderate comfort on their wages; but it was distinctly hard on rural postmen getting about the same wages when they had to live in a country town, pay £6 or £7 a year or more for a house, with none of the other advantages. That was a point that the right hon. Gentleman might well consider, because it was thought a great deal of in country districts. It was pretty clear from what had been generally stated that the cost of living had considerably increased in recent years, and from all sides of the House they also heard that the wages paid to the postmen by the Government were too low. How was it that these things were so under the present Liberal Government after sixty years of what hon. Gentlemen opposite were pleased to call "free trade."

DR. RUTHERFORD said although he was not satisfied with the statements of the right hon. Gentleman he felt that he had been met a considerable distance. They were thankful that the Postmaster-General had promised to reconsider the question of classification, because they contended that that was a very important and serious point. Hon. Members appeared to be quite satisfied with the discussion which had taken place, and under the circumstances he was prepared to withdraw his Amendment. [Cries of "No, no."]

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.) said that in the course of his reply the Postmaster-General had not touched upon the various grievances which had been put before the Committee by successive speakers in the course of the discussion. It was clear that there had been an increase in the cost of living, and this was likely still further to increase in the future. If under those circumstances there was going to be a reduction in the remuneration of those employed in the postal service, he contended that the Committee had no alternative but to go to a division as a protest.

*MR. WARDLE (Stockport) said he had been waiting the whole of the day in order to get an opportunity of saying one or two words upon this question. There was one aspect which had not been sufficiently recognised by the Committee. The advance in wages which had been granted had not been obtained by the barbarous method of a strike, but had been granted by a Committee of this House, and it seemed to him that that was an aspect of the case which deserved full consideration and showed that they believed in peaceable methods. With regard to those places where it was alleged that there had been a threat of reduction, he wished to point out that in none of those cases could that policy have fruition for at least four or five years, and during that period there was ample time for inquiry into the cost of living. Therefore, he did not think there was any need to be uneasy with regard to the question of these threatened reductions. Personally, he subscribed very largely to the view put forward by the hon. Member for Sunderland, who had pointed out that in a general scheme of reorganisation such as this where a large number of offices went up and a few went down it was certain there would be a considerable amount of dissatisfaction. He still held the opinion that it was quite possible to classify postmen, sorting clerks, and telegraphists in one classification, and there was a possibility of building up a better organisation on those lines. For those reasons, even the modification which the Postmaster-General had made might be entirely unnecessary in order that the indoor and outdoor forces could be put into the same classification, provided the criteria were altered by which the standard was arranged for the indoor and outdoor forces, or provided that the scales were rearranged on the same lines as those at present in force. There was one paragraph in the Committee's Report to which no allusion had been made, and it was one of the most important in the whole Report. For that reason he desired to call the attention of the Committee to it. In his opinion and in the opinion of the Committee there ought to be some reorganisation of the whole of the classes in the Post Office apart from the question of wages. He felt sure that a Committee of business men if they were to investigate——

And, it being Eleven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

———

REGISTRATION BILL. [LORDS.]

Order for Second Reading read.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields), in moving the Second Reading, said that this was a small Bill to amend the Registration Acts in connection with certain proceedings on appeals. The Bill had been made necessary owing to the alteration of the termination of the long vacation from 24th to 12th October. The dates in the Registration Acts were fixed with reference to the date at which the Michaelmas sittings began. The advancing of the date to 12th October made inappropriate nearly all the dates under the Registration Acts with regard to appeals.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir W. Robson.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Mr. Wardle.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

As amended, considered.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) moved to insert words in Clause 9 for the purpose of meeting certain criticisms which were offered when the Bill was in Committee.

Amendment proposed—

"In Clause 9, line 14, after the word "improperly," to insert the words "and costs."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted.

MR. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks) asked whether the effect of the Amendment was to bring the Bill into conformity with the existing law.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Yes, that is so.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) asked whether the meaning of the Government was "to repay, with costs, any sum of money applied improperly," and suggested that the words, as inserted in the Government Amendment, were not clear, and required explanation; they ought to have been inserted after the word "repay."

MR. HOBHOUSE replied that there might be some ambiguity as to the meaning of the clause without that word. He thought the Amendments proposed by the Government would clear up any doubt which might otherwise exist.

Question put, and agreed to.

MR. HOBHOUSE moved to delete all the words after the word "liable" to the end of the clause and to insert other words providing that certain liabilities should be deemed a civil debt recoverable under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts. He hoped the alteration would be satisfactory to the House.

MR. CARLILE said that it was essential that the members of friendly societies should realise that their funds were safe. He was quite sure that the hon. Gentleman desired that that should be the case and that he did not wish to weaken the hold of friendly societies on their funds. He asked whether these words would not rather weaken the hold of friendly societies over the persons who had the administration of their funds, by simply dealing with them as if they owed a civil debt. The onus of proving fraud would lie on the friendly societies, whereas hitherto, as he understood, if any trustee or officer misappropriated or misapplied the funds of a friendly society he had to prove himself innocent.

SIR W. ROBSON said that the hon. Gentleman was mistaken in his view of the law. The words now under discussion added very useful powers to those already possessed by friendly societies and did not in any way weaken or detract from their existing powers. A friendly society was able to go to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction and secure certain advantageous orders accompanied with a fine, but in order to do so under Section 87, subsection (3) of the principle Act, fraud had to be proved.

MR. CARLILE: But suppose the man had disappeared?

SIR W. ROBSON said that in that case he thought there could not be much difficulty in proving fraud. But it frequently happened that in a charge under Section 87, subsection (3) of the Act of 1887, the friendly society was unable to prove fraud. If these words were inserted the friendly society would be entitled to ask the magistrate to make an order to pay the money as if for a debt and that would enable the society to regain possession of their funds.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked why these Amendments should be proposed by the Government when hon. Members had not had the opportunity of considering them, and had simply to acquiesce in the explanation given by the hon. and learned Gentleman. He suggested to the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill that the most expeditious manner of carrying this measure through would be to defer it for further consideration on the Report stage to-morrow. If the Amendments had any value they could be discussed on their merits. The practice of bringing forward Amendments without notice was only another illustration of the way in which business was conducted from the Treasury Bench.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that these words were introduced at the express wish of the friendly societies.

MR. CLAUDE HAY said, if that were so, why were they not introduced before?

Amendment agreed to.

MR. HOBHOUSE moved to omit Clause 13. When this clause was brought up by the hon. Member opposite without his having had time to value its effect, he said he could only accept it conditionally, and that if on examination it was found to be an undesirable addition to the Bill he would delete it on the Report stage. The reason he moved its omission now was that the clause would give a premium on unnecessary legal procedure. It would undoubtedly have that effect.

MR. FORSTER said he wished to enter a mild protest against that method of amending such a Bill at that hour. Everybody would agree that if Amendments of this importance were necessary, they should appear on the Paper in order that those who took an interest in the subject matter of the Bill might know what to expect. He was in complete ignorance as to what Amendments the hon. Gentleman intended to propose to other parts of the Bill. He did not intend, however, to stand in the way in its immediate passage. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would put the Amendments on the Paper so that they might see where they stood.

*Mr. CLAUDE HAY asked whether this Amendment had been put forward by the Government at the instance of the friendly societies, and if so, why the right hon. Gentleman did not say so, He also would like to know if it was not on that ground why the hon. Gentleman proposed these Amendments. If they were put forward at the instance of friendly societies he wished to know at the instance of which friendly society or societies they were proposed.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

COMPANIES BILL [LORDS].

Order for Second Reading read.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir H. KEARLEY, Devonport) said the necessity for this Bill was brought to the attention of the Board of Trade by an influential deputation representing the large Colonial companies. The capital of Colonial companies invested in this country was computed to be between £24,000,000 and £25,000,000. It was shown that these companies had difficulty in carrying on business in this country, as they were under the Mortmain Act. Under that Act they could not acquire land in this country without either an Act of Parliament or an authorisation under the Crown. But protection was given under the Registration of Companies Act of 1862. Companies formed in the Colonies had not the benefit of the Companies Act, and had not the privilege of obtaining a private Act of Parliament: therefore they could only acquire land under the Mortmain Act at a fee of £60 on every transaction. What this Bill proposed to do was to provide that companies promoted in British Possessions should have the same privileges as companies formed in this country under the Companies Limited Liability Act. He had consulted the right hon. Member for St. George's on the question and was glad to say that the right hon. Member agreed with him that this was a concession that might be made and would be well received in the Colonies. He hoped the House would give it a Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square) said he knew that the present disability in regard to these companies existed in several of our Colonies, and he was grateful to the Government for bringing in a Bill to remove it.

MR. CLAUDE HAY thanked the right hon. Gentleman for his lucid explanation of this Bill, but asked why it should be thought necessary that the benefits of this Act should only apply to companies registered in British Possessions having business in this country. He did not see that it was necessary for them to have a place of business here in order to enjoy the benefits of the Bill.

SIR H. KEARLEY said it was only those who carried on business here that came within the provisions of the Mortmain Act.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Sir H. Kearley.*)

Whereupon MR. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty-nine minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 17*th July*, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz :—Crystal Palace Company Bill [Lords]; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz :—Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time upon Monday next.

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Third Reading deferred till Tuesday next, at a quarter-past Eight of the Clock.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP K).

Sir GEORGE WHITE reported from the Committee on Group K. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past Eleven of the colck.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Liverpool Corporation (Streets and Buildings) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., BILL.

Petition from Westminster, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Auchindoir; Handsworth; and London (four); to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Peterhead, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRISH RAILWAYS (VICE-REGAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Fourth Report of the Vice-Regal Commissioners on Irish Railways [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH RAILWAYS (VICE-REGAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Appendix to the Fourth Report of the Vice-Regal Commissioners [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 13th July; *Mr. Long*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 237.]

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE).

Copy presented, of Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of Agricultural Education in England and Wales, with a Copy of the Minutes appointing the Committee and Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE).

Copy presented, of Minutes of Evidence taken before the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of Agricultural Education in England and Wales, and Index [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County Borough of Newport, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4052 and 4059 to 4065 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Birching of Juvenile Offenders.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of William Carroll and Frank Self, both sixteen years of age, who were tried at Clerkenwell on a charge of robbing another boy of his pocket-knife and ordered to be thrashed by relatives; whether a policeman was told off to see that the punishment was properly inflicted; whether the flogging took place within the precincts of the Court; whether the instrument of correction was the police birch; and whether he will draw the magistrate's attention to the irregularity of the proceedings.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have made inquiry in this case, and am informed that these two lads were charged with robbing an errand-boy, one holding him while the other rifled his pockets. The magistrate who heard the charge was reluctant to convict them of felony or send them to prison, and adjourned the case on the defendants' relatives agreeing to give them proper chastisement. This was done at the lads' own homes, and without the intervention of the police. No order was given, or could have been given, for the purpose. On the next day the defendants were discharged. I cannot say that the magistrate was wrong in so dealing with a very difficult case.

International Opium Commission—Terms of Reference.

MR. THEODORE TAYLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will state what are the terms of reference of the International Opium Commission proposed by the United States.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The terms of reference are not yet finally settled; as soon as they are settled a copy will be sent to the hon. Member.

New Hebrides Convention—Delay in Appointing a British Law Court Judge.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the reason for the prolonged delay in appointing a British judge of the Land Court constituted under the New Hebrides Convention; and whether, having regard to the fact that a French judge was appointed some months ago, and is already on the spot and becoming acquainted with the details of the case from the French point of view, an early appointment can be made in the interests of British settlers and British claims.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) There has been some difficulty in finding a candidate with suitable qualifications for this post, and more than one gentleman who has been recommended, and thought likely to accept it, has declined it for personal reasons. But is it hoped that an appointment will be made some time before the court buildings are ready, which will probably not be before the end of the year. I understand that it is not the case that the French judge has been appointed, and is already in the New Hebrides.

Midland and Great Western Railway and Mullingar Canal Towing Path.

MR. GINNELL (Westmeath, N.): To ask the President of the Board of Trad if he will say on what representations, if any, the Board of Trade has allowed the Midland Great Western Railway Company to encroach upon and appropriate to railway uses portion of the towing bank of the Royal Canal at Mullingar, to a length of 396 yards; and, if this is irregular, will he have the work now in progress suspended pending due inquiry and notice to the public interested in the canal.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Board of Trade have had no representations with regard to this matter, and have no power to take the action suggested by the hon. Member.

MR. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland by what authority and on whose report, if any, has the Midland Great Western Railway Company been allowed to erect a fence 396 yards in length on the towing bank of the Royal Canal at Mullingar, enclosing and appropriating to railway uses land belonging to the canal: if he is aware that this canal was constructed in the eighteenth century mainly with money voted by the Irish Parliament, and that the railway company, while bound to maintain the canal navigable, discourage its use as a rival goods thoroughfare; what inquiry was held, or opportunity given to the public for whose use the canal was constructed, to resist the application for power to alienate the land of the canal; what money has the railway company paid for the land, and to whom; and, if the land has not been properly acquired by the railway company, will he order its immediate restoration to its legitimate purpose pending local public inquiry.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed by the Board of Control of the Royal Canal that the fences referred to were erected by the railway company some time since. No complaint of obstruction or inconvenience to the navigation by reason of the fencing has reached the Board. Ample land has been lett for the purposes of canal traffic. The construction of the canal was begun in the 18th century by a company incorporated in 1789, and the cost was defrayed mainly by public subscriptions amounting to about £1,000,000, and partly by Parliamentary grants amounting to some £360,000, of which about £90,000 was granted by the Irish Parliament and the remainder after the Union. The canal was completed by the Commissioners of Inland Navigation and handed over to a new company by the Act 58 Geo. III., c. 35 (1818). The lands of the canal company were vested in the Midland Great Western Railway Company by the Act 8 and 9 Vict., c. CXIX. (1845). There is no doubt that the land belongs to the railway company, but they are bound in using it to have proper regard to the interests of the navigation; and the Board of Control exercise their function of securing that this statutory duty is discharged by the railway company.

Local Expenditure.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the total annual expenditure by local bodies in England and Wales during the year ending 1906–7, and also the total of the municipal debt down to that year.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The latest available figures relate to the year 1905–6. The total expenditure of the local authorities in England and Wales, other than that defrayed out of loans, amounted in that year approximately to £114,450,000. The gross amount of their outstanding loans at the end of the year was approximately £483,000,000. The expenditure and loans of the Metropolitan Water Board are included in the above figures.

Preservatives in Butter.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he has under consideration the question of issuing regulations affecting the use of preservatives in butter imported into the United Kingdom; and, seeing that Australia now exports to the United Kingdom butter to the value of over £3,000,000 sterling, and that all this butter is inspected before shipment by the Government and guaranteed to be pure and wholesome, will he give due notice to Australian producers and consider their views before making any changes in existing practice.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As I have stated in reply to previous Questions, I am giving attention to the matter of preservatives in certain food stuffs, and I am collecting information on the subject. There is no immediate attention of issuing regulations with regard to preservatives in butter. Notice would be given before any such regulations, if found necessary, came into force; but it is not likely that they would interfere materially with the very large trade in butter with the British Colonies.

Small Holding Schemes.

Mr. ESSEX (Gloucestershire, Cirencester): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in the event of a county council putting into force the compulsory powers of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907, the Board of Agriculture will bear the extra expenses entailed.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Yes.

Rural Population and Old-Age Pensions.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated number of persons in rural districts, as distinct from urban districts, who will become entitled to pensions on the Pensions Bill becoming operative.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is estimated that about 194,000 persons in rural districts, as distinct from urban districts, will become entitled to pension. The estimate is, of course, approximate only.

Farms Held by the Ballesty Family.

Mr. GINNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will ascertain and state the date of origin and nature of the tenancy alleged to be held by Eugene Ballesty in his mother's farm on the Malone estate, Westmeath, towards the purchase of which the Estates Commissioners have offered to advance to him £3,000; when did that land cease to be held on the eleven-months grazing system; how many other grass farms does that Ballesty family hold; what is their aggregate acreage; how many uneconomic holdings on the Malone estate have been sold without enlargement to the tenants; and, whether, with a view to relieving congestion, he will ask the Commissioners to treat the alleged tenancy as spurious, withdraw their offer of £3,000, and refuse to sanction any sale of the grass farm in question except for distribution.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have ascertained that a yearly tenancy has existed in the holding since 1879. The Commissioners are not aware when it ceased to be held on the eleven-months grazing system or how many grass farms the Ballesty family hold. A number of small holdings on the Malone estate have not been enlarged. The Commissioners see no reason for holding that the tenancy in question is spurious, or for altering the ruling which they have already made in the matter.

Proclaimed Counties in Ireland.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will give in tabular form a list of the counties which have been declared within the past twelve months, by proclamation issued pursuant to Section 13 of 6 and 7 Will. IV., c. 13, to be in a state of disturbance requiring additional forces of police, with the dates of the proclamations, the authorised free quota of police, the strength of the additional forces at present serving in each county, and the date at which the proclamation of each such county for similar purposes was last previously withdrawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The following table gives the information asked for—

Proclaimed counties.	Date of proclamation.	Free quota.	Additional forces now serving.		Date of withdrawal of previous similar proclamations.
			Head constables.	Sergeants and Constables.	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Clare - -	27th Aug. 1907	367	1	71	*
Galway, East Riding -	,,	313	2	191	*
Galway, West Riding -		303	—	116	
King's - -	,,	164	—	24	26th Sept. 1884
Leitrim - -	,,	147	—	19	10th Aug. 1892
Longford - -	,,	110	—	21	4th Feb. 1890
Roscommon -	,,	256	2	105	30th Sept. 1893
Sligo - -	12th June 1908	206	—	30	10th Aug. 1892
Westmeath -	,,	190	—	45	10th Aug. 1892

* The proclamations of Clare and Galway were not formally withdrawn, but the additional police were removed from these counties in 1899 and 1898 respectively, and the proclamations thereby became spent and inoperative.

Irish Local Expenditure.

Mr. PIKE PEASE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the total local expenditure in Ireland for the year ending 1906–7, and the total municipal debt at the present time.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The gross total expenditure of local bodies in Ireland for the year 1906–7 amounted to £8,851,186, but this figure includes sums amounting to £2,183,367 paid by county councils to the subordinate local authorities financed by them. The net total expenditure may, therefore, be regarded as £6,667,819. The indebtedness of municipal authorities at the present time is not available, but on 31st March 1907 it was £8,806,476.

The Union Jack and the Territorial Force.

Mr. HUNT: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that there is a difference in the pattern of the Union Jack, used on His Majesty's ships from that used in recent years in His Majesty's Army, the new Territorial Force will be supplied with the pattern used in the Navy or in the Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) No issues of the Union Jack will be made to the Territorial Force.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B. (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning etc., Bill): Mr. Murray; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Dudley Ward.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the followng Member from Standing Committee C. (in respect of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill): Sir Francis Edwards; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Robert Harcourt.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A.: Mr. Sears; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Handloom Weaving (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Walters.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B.: Mr. Bethell; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Sir John Bethell.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.
LICENSING BILL—ALLOCATION OF TIME.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.) said: The Motion I am about to submit to the House naturally and necessarily raises the constantly recurring protest against the use and abuse of the guillotine. I do not propose to enter to-day upon the vexed historic question, which, perhaps, only the historian can justly decide, as to which party in the State is entitled to the larger share of credit or discredit for the invention, development, and bringing to perfection of this new Parliamentary instrument. It is sufficient to put on record the undoubted fact that during the last ten years, and I think I might even go further back, apart from the annual Finance Bill, there is hardly any legislative measure of the first class and at the same time of an elaborate and contentious character which has been carried through the House of Commons without at some stage recourse being had to this expedient. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that, unless the majority for the time being is to be placed at the mercy of the minority, unless, which is still more important, the strenuous hours and days and weeks which we give to the manufacture of legislation are to be doomed to futility, the closure, which is now everywhere regarded as a normal and indispensable part of the Parliamentary machine, must be supplemented from time to time by the definite and compulsory allocation of Parliamentary time for the Committee and later stages of almost every considerable and disputable measure. I have often expressed the opinion, and I still hold it, that, given the necessity for the guillotine, it would be very desirable that its application to any particular case should be determined by some tribunal less open to the suspicion of partiality and arbitrariness than the Government of the day, subject always, of course, to the final judgment of the House. But I am afraid that is almost as much a counsel of perfection as the guillotine itself is regarded by many people as the counsel of despair. At any rate, not only is there nothing like unanimity, but we do not seem within measurable distance of agreement as to the constitution and functions of such a body as I have described. So long as that is the case the responsibility for initiating the guillotine must rest with the Government of the day. That being so, there are, as each arises, two questions which present themselves. The first is what is the aggregate amount of time that can really be given to any particular measure, and the second, how that time ought to be apportioned having regard to the relative importance and interest of its various provisions and clauses. In this matter, which is a delicate one, both sides of the House will agree with me that one who is both head of the Government and Leader of the House has a double set of not very easily reconciled duties to perform. On the one hand, he is bound to do all he reasonably can to promote the legislative work of the Administration. On the other hand, he is equally bound, and in some sense as trustee of the liberties of this House to maintain its right to free discussion and to see that any unnecessary encroachment upon or curtailment of that right is adequately and jealously safeguarded. I can assure the House that, in the Motion I am about to propose, I have honestly endeavoured to keep both those objects equally in view. I venture to claim for this guillotine Resolution that in its class—an unhappy class, if you like, of necessary Parliamentary evils—it is at any rate not less scientific in form, and I think far more considerate in operation, than any of its predecessors. Let me ask your attention for a few moments when I examine the Resolution itself. I will first of all deal with the question of the aggregate time we propose to give to the remaining stages of the Licensing Bill. And let me say that in our opinion experience has shown it to be desirable that that question should be determined before we enter upon the Committee stage. Everyone who has heard discussions on the guillotine will agree that if you allow the Committee stage to begin before you propose and carry your time-table the inevitable result is that the earlier clauses of the Bill are over-discussed and the later clauses are under-discussed; and furthermore—a thing which is to be deprecated—the whole matter is inevitably embittered by controversy as to whether or not there has been obstruction. Again, may I say—and here, I think, I shall command general assent—you must determine the length of time to be given in proceedings of this sort, not altogether by reference to the number of clauses in the Bill. The Licensing Bill contains a very considerable number of clauses, some of which, I agree, bristle with contentions and most disputable matter. But there are others, and not an inconsiderable number, which affect administration or minor changes in the law, or small requirements which are practically a subsidiary, though not an unimportant, part of the sphere of licensing legislation, as to which there is something like general agreement in all parts of the House. In these circumstances, we are bound to have regard, I will not say to the necessity, but to the extreme desirability, of the Bill reaching the House of Lords at a time in the autumn sittings when they could take it into reasonable consideration, and should have no ground of complaint that they were being hustled in the matter. Add to those considerations the fact which stares us in the face that, although we are now only in the middle of July and three months remain during which the fabricators of Amendments can exercise their ingenuity and zeal, there are now fifty-two pages of Amendments, or in number 980 Amendments on the Paper. The House will, therefore, see the impossibility of the task we have set before us, if some definition be not made by the House itself of the total amount of time to be expended on the Committee and Report stages of the Bill. We have already spent on the general discussion of the Bill five days, and if the Government Resolution is adopted we shall, in addition to these five days, spend nineteen days in Committee, five on the Report stage, one on the Third Reading; that is twenty-five more days, or, in other words, we shall have spent thirty days in all on the discussion of the Bill in this House. In our opinion that is a reasonable time to devote to the measure. Now I come to another point, which, in some respects, is more difficult to deal with satisfactorily and fairly than even the question of the aggregate amount of time. I mean the allocation of time as between different parts and clauses of the Bill. Here, let me say that we have taken a great deal of pains to do justice, as far as we could, to the various important points in dispute. Our object has been to secure that all the most important and contentious provisions should be discussed; and, in endeavouring to carry out the object, we have been guided partly by our own knowledge of the subject and partly by the number, class, and character of the Amendments upon the Paper. I am not going through the whole of the time-table, but I will give a few samples to show how it will work out in practice. The first two days in Committee are given to Clause 1, the clause which provides for the statutory reduction of licences on a fixed proportion to population, within a specified term of years; a most important clause, no doubt, but one which we think can be well discussed on Monday and Tuesday next. I come to a still more important clause, Clause 3, which fixes the question of the time-limit and the legal position of existing licences on its expiration. To the discussion of that subject we give the fourth, fifth, and half of the sixth day in Committee—that is to say, two and-a-half days—so that there can be no question whatever that this, which is in many ways the most thorny section of the Bill, will be satisfactorily traversed. To Clause 9, which provides for local option in Wales as to reduction of licences beyond the statutory reduction prescribed in Clause 1, we give a whole day. The next contentious point, and one, I admit, of serious importance, is raised in Clauses 10 and 11, and relates to the amount and division of the compensation fund. To these clauses we have given two days. Other very important, though I hope not equally contentious points, are raised in Clauses 18, 19 and 20, which deal with Sunday closing, the exclusion of children from licensed premises, and the power to attach conditions to the renewal of existing licences. To these clauses we give two days. Finally, there is the highly contentious principle of the treatment of clubs, which will be found in Clauses 36 to 40. To these we propose again to give two days. These, I think, are the most disputable points in the Bill. It follows from what I have said that, if a fair use is made of the allotted time, every highly important or contentious proposal may be amply discussed. At the same time we recognise that accidents are very likely to occur, that with the best goodwill in all quarters material and important topics may not fall within the time allotted to the Bill on the Committee stage. Accordingly, we have proposed what, I think, is an innovation in these guillotine Resolutions with regard to the Report stage. We do not propose that the House should proceed to determine in advance how the five days we propose to give to the Report stage should be allotted. We think it a more satisfactory arrangement that the precise allocation of those days should be deferred until the Committee is over, so that important points which have escaped discussion or may not have been adequately discussed will secure priority on the Report stage. I do not think it is possible to go further than we have gone in reconciling what I admit is the crude, and in some respects inevitably harsh, requirements of the guillotine Resolution to the requirements of free discussion and fairness to all sections of the House. I have only to add that the Resolution has been drawn with these considerations in view, and I believe that if the House will assent to it it will be found that we can reasonably and adequately discuss all the provisions, numerous and contentious as they are, of this most important measure. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee stage, Report stage, and Third Reading of the Licensing Bill, and the necessary stages of the Financial Resolution relating thereto, shall be proceeded with as follows: (1) Committee stage.—Nineteen allotted days shall be given to the Committee stage of the Bill, and the proceedings in Committee on each allotted day shall be those shown in the second column of the table annexed to this Order, and those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the time shown in the third column of that table. (2) Report stage.—Five allotted days shall be given to the Report stage of the Bill, and the proceedings for each of those allotted days shall be such as may be hereafter determined in manner provided by this Order, and those proceedings, if not previously brought to a conclusion, shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on each such allotted day. (3) Third Reading.—One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings thereon shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day. On the conclusion of the Committee stage the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put, and the House shall then proceed to consider the proposals made by the Government for the allocation of the proceedings on the Report stage of the Bill between the allotted days given to that stage. The proceedings on the consideration of those proposals may be entered on at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House, but if they are not brought to a conclusion before the expiration of two hours after they have been commenced the Speaker shall, at the expiration of that time, bring them to a conclusion by putting the Question on the Motion proposed by the Government, after having put the Question, if necessary, on any Amendment or other Motion which has been already proposed from the Chair and not disposed of. After this Order comes into operation, any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution relating thereto is put down as the first Order of the Day, followed by the Bill. Provided that 5 p.m. shall be substituted for 10.30 p.m. as the time at which proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under the foregoing provisions on any allotted day which is a Friday, but Friday shall not be considered an allotted day for the purpose of the sixth or seventh allotted days. For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments, new clauses, or schedules moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, clauses or schedules, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. A Motion may be made by the Government to leave out any clause or consecutive clauses of the Bill before the consideration of any Amendments to the clause or clauses in Committee. The Question on a Motion made by the Government to leave out any clause or clauses of the Bill shall be put forthwith by the Chairman or Speaker without debate. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking Private Business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day, no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to recommit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by the Government, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) Prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) Prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of.

Table.

Committee Stage.

Allotted Day.	Proceedings.	Time for Proceedings to be brought to a Conclusion.
First - - -	Clause 1 - - - - - - -	—
Second - - -	Clause 1 - - - - - - -	10.30
Third - - -	Clause 2 - - - - - - -	10.30
Fourth - - -	Clause 3 to the beginning of sub-section (2)	—
Fifth - - -	Clause 3 to the beginning of sub-section (2)	10.30
Sixth - - -	Clause 3, subsection (2) - - -	7.30
	Clauses 4 and 5 - - - -	—
Seventh - - -	Clauses 4 and 5 - - - -	7.30
	Clauses 6, 7, and 8 - - - -	10.30
Eighth - - -	Clause 9 - - - - - -	10.30
Ninth - - -	Clauses 10 and 11 - - - -	—
Tenth - - -	Clauses 10 and 11 - - - -	10.30
Eleventh - -	Clauses 12, 13, and Committee stage of Financial Resolution	10.30
Twelfth - - -	Report stage of Financial Resolution and Clauses 14 to 17	10.30
Thirteenth - -	Clauses 18 and 19 - - - -	10.30
Fourteenth - -	Clauses 20 - - - - -	10.30
Fifteenth - -	Clauses 21 to 35 - - - -	10.30
Sixteenth - -	Clause 36 - - - -	10.30
Seventeenth - -	Clauses 37 to 40 - - - -	10.30
Eighteenth - -	Clauses 41 to 47, and new Clauses -	10.30
Nineteenth - -	Schedules, and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee stage to a conclusion	10.30

—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Mr. Speaker, in the observations which I propose to make on the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman I shall not dwell at any length upon what occupied, naturally enough, most of his speech—namely, the details of the Resolution whose terms you have just read from the Chair. I will content myself on that branch of the subject with saying that there are in this Resolution two novelties. One is that there is to be a second discussion, apparently after the Committee stage, upon the amount of time to be allotted to the various topics, on the Report stage. I think it possible that that innovation may work well, although I confess I do not clearly apprehend precisely how the Government mean to approach the subject. Whether they mean to come down to the House after having heard all that has passed on the Committee stage and make proposals for allocation, and ask the House to discuss those proposals, or whether they mean to leave the subject more at large, I know not; and I prefer to leave any discussion on that point until we come to a later stage in the afternoon's discussion. I think there are Amendments on the Paper which will raise it. I will only say now that I cannot imagine a worse time for having a second discussion than the moment immediately succeeding a heated debate on the Committee stage. The right hon. Gentleman knows enough of the House of Commons to be aware that when the last guillotine falls on a hotly debated Bill which excites violent passions outside, which naturally, and even necessarily, have an echo within the walls of this House, that is not a good moment to enter into a calm and cool survey of what has gone on in Committee, or to make proposals adequate for the Report stage. I think an hon. friend of mine has an Amendment on the subject, and I dwell on it no longer at the present moment. I turn, as the House will expect me to turn, to the more general considerations involved in the right hon. Gentleman's proposal. He began his speech by telling us that only history could decide as to what party in the State is more responsible for the use, for the abuse, and for the perfection of this particular means of cutting short Parliamentary discussion. I think I can aid the historian at all events in coming to a fair conclusion on that subject, and I think it is the more necessary to do so because I have observed in the debates we have had on this subject that there appears to be a large section of the House who seem to think that the proposals made by the Government, and their general mode of conducting Parliamentary business, are really on all fours with those of their predecessors, that they are doing no more either in degree or in kind than those who came before them in office, and that the only difference is that the right hon. Gentleman is now making the same sort of speech that the late Leader of the House made when in office, and that the late Leader of the House now in Opposition is making the same sort of speech that the right hon. Gentleman opposite made when he occupied his position, and that, as we have exchanged benches, so we have exchanged arguments and speeches and policies — that is the general position taken up by some hon. Members on this particular topic. Nothing in the world is further from the truth, and in order that this may be established let me remind the House of what I am convinced many hon. Members have either forgotten or never known, of what has actually taken place with regard to closure by compartments since closure by compartments was used in this House just about twenty years ago. It was first used in the Parliament of 1886 to 1892, and in that Parliament it was used twice. That was a Unionist Parliament. It was then used in the Parliament which lasted from 1892 to 1895—a Radical and Home Rule Parliament, and in that Parliament it was again used twice. In the Parliament of 1895 to 1900 it was not used at all. In the Parliament of 1900 to 1905 it was used three times in regard to Bills. In other words, from 1886 until the right hon. Gentleman came into office at the end of 1905, closure by compartments was used in regard to Bills in all seven times. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite have now had control of the business of the House for two sessions and a half, and as against the seven times in which closure by compartments was used for Bills during the four preceding Parliaments of the preceding nineteen years the present Government have already in two sessions and a half used it in regard to ten Bills. That is a difference in amount which everybody will admit amounts to a difference in kind. Nobody will pretend, or can pretend, to say that it is the same thing as when, for example, Mr. Gladstone brought forward closure by compartments to bring to a termination a great controversial measure like the Home Rule Bill, or when the Unionist Party brought it forward to deal with an Education Bill which had dragged its weary length through forty days, I think, in Committee—nobody would pretend that there is the smallest analogy between occasional and guarded use of this measure on those occasions and the perpetual application of it to every measure in turn. I confess I never heard from the present Government a justification of this wholly new method of dealing with current Parliamentary business. The general Parliamentary management of the Government is and remains to me a profound mystery. In the first session of this Parliament they had an autumn session. I ventured at that time to warn the Government that an autumn session was almost fatal to the work of the Government Departments themselves, whether you regarded the work of those Departments as being the work of the permanent officials or of their Parliamentary chiefs. The work could not be done if you were going to make the House sit through not only six months of the year, but all through the autumn as well. I preached in vain in 1906, but in 1907 I found, as I thought, converts on the bench opposite. I found the late Prime Minister and some of his colleagues repeating, naturally without acknowledgment, the words I had ventured to use when I said I thought the business of the country could not be carried on under the strain of these autumn sessions, not merely in the House, but on responsible authorities outside. The lesson taught in 1906 and learned in 1907 is forgotten in 1908. The right hon. Gentleman comes down and proposes as a matter of course not only that we should have an autumn session, but that all the important business of that autumn session should be carried on under this new and now habitual method of Parliamentary procedure. I must frankly say, still guiding the historian, that when that gentleman comes to deal with the speeches made for or against the closure he will find that the substance of those speeches differs as completely as the general policy which those speeches were intended to support. Of course, I agree it would not be fair, either to the right hon. Gentleman or to anybody else, to quote as necessarily applicable to existing situations speeches made in this House in the earlier period of this movement, because the matter was then undeveloped. The House had not had time to look round, and I quite agree that both the Leaders of the Opposition and of the Government for the time being, to whichever side they may belong, cannot and ought not to be bound to the views which were necessarily subject to modification, not because they had changed from one side to the other of the House, but because their Parliamentary experience had been enlarged by the progress of time. But let us consider the Prime Minister's last utterance when he was in opposition. I confess I had forgotten it, but some friend suggested that I should look through the speech just before I came down to the House. I have done so, and although I do not know that I have had time to give it full and mature consideration, I have done so, I may say, with enormous interest, profit, and I will add, amusement. This speech was delivered upon a Motion made by the late Government of closure by compartments on the Licensing Bill. The Motion for closure by compartments then moved by myself from that bench was debated by the House for two days and a half, which is, if I heard the right hon. Gentleman aright, the exact amount of time that he thinks is necessary and proper to devote to the discussion of the portion of this measure which is to take away the whole of the profits of the licensed trade of this country at the end of fourteen years. It may be a small matter, but the view of the Leader of the present Government and of the late Opposition is that the same amount of Parliamentary time as was taken to consider the Resolution for closure by compartments in 1904 is now sufficient to discuss a proposal which is to take away the whole of the property of the publicans of this country in fourteen years. How were those two and a half days occupied? I confess my researches have not gone much beyond the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. He moved an Amendment to the Motion; he began by expressing his horror at the late stage in the session at which the Bill was brought forward. It appears that the Second Reading was not passed until 9th May, and that by 1st July, 1904, we had only had six days in Committee on the Bill. This is the way the right hon. Gentleman discussed it—

> "It is this tardy and delaying treatment of subjects which the Government asked the House to believe to be of capital and national importance—it is that, far more than prolixity or exuberance of speech on one side of the House or the other, which has brought Parliamentary business into the intolerable muddle which the right hon. Gentleman comes here to-day to confess, and from which he asks the House to provide him with arbitrary means of escape."

That was a speech made when we had been already six days in Committee on the Bill, and the right hon. Gentleman does not now propose to get into Committee until after 20th July, on a Bill dealing with the same subject, but of much greater importance and more far-reaching significance, and he proposes to defer practically the whole discussion, except on the first clause, until the autumn session. The right hon. Gentleman, having said it was entirely due to the muddle of those then responsible for the conduct of business, proceeded to discuss the justification for the course we were then proposing. He said there was no colour or pretext for our proposition. In every case, he pointed out, where the closure was asked for, except the Evicted Tenants Bill, the Bill under discussion had been in Committee for twenty or thirty days. He goes on to say—

> "But there is not a single case in which a Minister has come to this House to ask for such powers without any attempt to prove that there has been something in the shape of organised obstruction."

The right hon. Gentleman, oblivious to these recent utterances of his, claims it as a merit that he is not going to act like those belated and benighted Ministers in the past. He is not going to wait until obstruction has been proved. He is not going to carry out his own doctrines which he preached in opposition now that he has got into office. He is going to anticipate obstruction and to take care from the very beginning that the House shall discuss this great matter in fetters. The whole speech is really worth careful consideration. There is one extract which I hope the House will allow me to give, although it is lengthy; it is really so admirably put that I will not call it troubling the House. Although I think I can sometimes improve on the right hon. Gentleman's argument, I am quite conscious I can never improve on his language. The Prime Minister, referring to myself, said—

> "The right hon. Gentleman at the close of his speech made some remarks about measures of this kind being necessary for the dignity and efficiency of the House of Commons. I confess I think political cynicism has rarely reached a higher level. I say so because this is only the latest, though I hope it may be the last, of the attempts which have been made under the right hon. Gentleman's initiative or patronage—I care not which—in the last two years to stifle the voice and paralyse the action of the House of Commons. Parliamentary majorities come and go, and Ministers come and go, but there is one thing which hitherto, at any rate, has persisted through all these chances and changes of party fortunes, and that has been the authority and the freedom of the House of Commons. That is a great permanent asset in our national balance-sheet, and it will be an evil day for the future of democracy in this country when the House of Commons comes to be regarded as a mere automatic machine for registering the edicts of a transient and perhaps a crumbling majority."

MR. ASQUITH: When the right hon. Gentleman has finished, perhaps he will let me have the volume. I want to read the right hon. Gentleman's speech.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope the House will be as much entertained by my speech as by the right hon. Gentleman's. These are not ancient, musty criticisms, but a speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman at a time when he anticipated, and rightly anticipated, that he was going to be called, at no very distant date, to a most important position on the front bench opposite. They were made with the responsibility of one who anticipated being in the forefront of administration.

within a very brief period. I do not think there has ever been so violent a change. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the views I expressed when I was in the Government. I have not taken the same pains to read my own speeches as I have to read the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman. I am sure they are very much less worth a careful and critical perusal. But of this I am fairly confident, that you will find that during the long period that I was responsible, either on one side of the House or the other, for dealing with these matters, at any rate since 1895—I think you will find that the doctrine I persistently laid down was that these Motions in the first place should only be made when there have been evident signs of obstruction with regard to the measure itself; and, in the second place, they should not be used to pass a vast number of unconsidered measures. They are only justified by occasional necessities. I have always held, and still hold, that the Government cannot be precluded by time, by anything in the nature of obstruction, or, indeed, by fair debate from passing their great controversial measures. This I admit and have maintained. But from these principles is it possible to deduce any justification for trying to pass ten Bills in two and a half years by this means? Neither the practice of the late Government nor the speeches made by members of the late Government can afford any justification for so violent a change in our procedure. If you take a particular closure Resolution you may very likely find a particular phrase as precedent; but you cannot find a precedent for your practice. I am bound to say that the way the present Government have treated the liberties of this House, their reckless interference time after time, on all occasions, and for all purposes, really does justify the phrase used by the right hon. Gentleman four years ago that—

> "We are taking a step on the road to humiliation and impotence."

And, if the House gives way, not to this or that particular Motion with regard to closure, but to the general habit of putting on closure whenever the Government are embarrassed in the conduct of business, they will, indeed, be guilty of "an ignominious surrender." For these reasons, although I do not think it worth while to put down an elaborate Amendment to this Resolution, my friends and I will certainly divide against it as a whole, when we have dealt with such Amendments in detail as we think necessary; and I shall do so fully assured that all those who have gravely taken into account the present position of Parliamentary discussion, if they look at the question as a whole and concentrate their gaze not merely upon this or that Parliamentary episode, but at the general conduct of business under one or other Administration, will be driven inevitably to the conclusion that this Government have initiated a new and most baneful practice. They have initiated for the first time—absolutely for the first time—the habit of dealing with every Parliamentary difficulty by one method and one method alone, not argument, not persuasion, but the crude and coarse method of the guillotine.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) rose to move as an Amendment: "That this House declines to continue the practice of passing procedure Resolutions to deal with the later stages of particular Bills, and calls upon the Government to lay before it proposals for settling the procedure of this House on a permanent basis." He would not, he said, now enter into detailed examination of the proposal or repeat what had been said by his right hon. friend as to the history of this matter. The House would agree that an impartial view of that history would show that there was a distinct tendency in these closure Resolutions to remove the consideration of legislation from the House of Commons and to hand it over to the Government of the day. These Motions had been submitted over and over again, and he need not go back to twenty years ago, because they had seen what had occurred in the case of the Old-Age Pensions Bill; he need not ask the House to carry its recollection back to four years ago, but to only a few days ago. What happened on the Old-Age Pensions Bill? They had discussed it five days in Committee, and an immense portion of the Bill was never considered at all. It was a measure which was undoubtedly of vast importance to the social conditions of the country, and yet an immense number of the most important principles raised by the Bill were never considered by the House at all. He did not think that any Members on the benches opposite—and he wished there had been more of them present to hear what he had to say—would assert that there had been an attempt, a wicked and determined attempt, to concentrate the attention of the House on unimportant matters. He did not believe that that was true a bit. He believed that the hon. Member for Blackburn was far nearer the truth when he pointed out that there had been no attempt on the part of the Government to reach important matters under the guillotine Resolution. But as far as he and that House was concerned, it mattered nothing, when they were considering this general procedure, whether the failure of the House to discuss the Old-Age Pensions Bill was due to the wicked conduct of members of the Opposition, or to the ingenious evasion of their responsibilities and difficulties by the Government of the day. The point was that the attention of the House was removed from the consideration of a number of very important principles of the Bill; in other words, there was never a proper and real discussion of the measure in the House. The Bill went forth with the authority in many important respects, not of the House, but merely of the Government. He had ventured to say once or twice that if that went on and if every first class measure was to be removed from the consideration of the House, it meant the destruction of the House of Commons. Let there not be any mistake about it—that was the real issue they had to face. They were threatened with the destruction of the House of Commons by this method of procedure. Was it to be supposed that gentlemen of ability and experience would continue to devote their time and attention to the service of their country in that House if they were to have no real share in framing the legislation put before it? It meant that they would get nobody but professional politicians to come into the House; it meant a general degradation of the whole temper and tone of the House, inevitably accompanied by a degradation of its position and prestige; in other words, the House of Commons would cease to be what it had been in the past, and what it must be under our constitution, if our constitution was to work at all. He thought that that was a matter for very serious consideration, and one to which the House as a whole, and not only those sitting on the front benches, ought to give their careful attention. It was really a matter beyond all party considerations; it was a question which touched the very constitution of the country, and he invited the attention of the House to the constitutional question. He did not venture to say that they could do without any artificial assistance in legislation. He quite admitted, and he did not think that anyone could doubt, that, when the Government, whether Unionist or Radical, came down and said that they must get through this or that piece of legislation, that they regarded it as of vital importance to the country, and that they could not get it through without some modification of the rules of the House, they made what must be felt to be a very strong observation. If they had really to deal with that question, then they must consider what was the proper remedy for the difficulties of getting legislation through that House. A very large number of remedies had been suggested. It was not that there was any want of suggestions. Many of them thought that one remedy was not to try to do so much as had been tried by the present Government. He felt very strongly that it was a great delusion to suppose that the principal function of the House of Commons was to pass measures. The principal function of the House of Commons was to discuss measures. They must frame their legislation in such a way as to enable its main principles to be properly and efficiently discussed. Not merely the general principles on the Second and Third Readings of a Bill, which was really a very ineffective form of discussion, but also the actual details of the proposals made. Therefore, to a certain extent, he shared the views of many of his friends, that a remedy was to be found in less legislation. But he did not think that that was the chief remedy, and he recognised most fully that the Opposition would always have a different view of the amount of legislation that ought to be carried by the Government of the day from that which prevailed on the benches behind Ministers. The hon. Member who sat below the gangway voiced what was constantly said by his friends, that the true remedy was Home Rule and devolution. He thought that five minutes consideration or less would show that that was no remedy at all. Supposing that they had Home Rule in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, what difference would it make? Why, scarcely any difference at all. What were the Irish and Scottish Bills of this session? They had the Irish University Bill, which had occupied one day in that House. They had the Scottish Education Bill, which he thought had occupied rather less than one day in that House. He did not recall at that moment any other measure of legislation which had occupied any considerable time, and which applied to Ireland and Scotland. Yes, there were two or three days on the Scottish Land Bill before Easter; he had forgotten that.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.) said the noble Lord had also forgotten that during one part of the session they had five consecutive days on Irish affairs.

Lord R. CECIL said they were not legislative days. He would be exceedingly loth that they should not give a portion of their time exclusively to Scottish affairs or Irish affairs, but even assuming that they gave a fortnight of their time, what difference would it make? Exceedingly little. Everybody must see that. Devolution was not a remedy; besides which, even if it were, it could not be adopted by the present Parliament, because the Government had said that they were not prepared to propose it. That, therefore, was not a practical remedy, though it might be theoretically a matter for discussion. That must be admitted by every fair-minded Member of the House who had considered the matter. He would put aside those two remedies as not practicable. What other remedies were there? He remembered that the hon. Member for Appleby on one occasion proposed with fine enthusiasm that they should sit up all night and every night, in order to pass the Licensing Bill. He was sorry to say he took precisely the opposite view. Of all the remedies suggested he thought that of all-night sittings was the very worst. He did not wish to be unduly generous to the Government, but he did wish to say that he was personally grateful to the Prime Minister, who had certainly made a change in that respect. The right hon. Gentleman had not asked the House to sit up all night at all this session; he had set his face against those all-night sittings, and preferred any other remedy to that. He had sat up all night himself, and he was quite satisfied that the House was never worse than it was at an all-night sitting. It did not make any real attempt to consider the legislation before it, and regarded an all-night sitting as a kind of middle-aged lark in which third-rate jokes were bandied about from side to side of the House amidst rather empty laughter. The real and serious debate which went on was not worth considering for a moment. Personally he rejected all-night sittings as a possible remedy. That did not mean that they were driven back to some form of the regular guillotine, which the Prime Minister thought was inevitable. He ventured to ask the Prime Minister to reconsider that opinion. He did not think that there was any form of guillotine which was really tolerable. The guillotine meant that if there was any question that the Government did not want to have discussed on a Bill they merely had to arrange that the discussion on other matters should take place at such a time as would force the decision of that question outside any debate by the House. That was from the point of view of the Opposition. But from the point of view of the Government it meant that they practically left the Opposition, or not the Opposition only, but groups of ten or twenty Members, to decide what should be discussed or not by the House. He personally did not think that a tolerable position. Nor did he himself think that any form of business Committee, or anything of that kind, would be any very effective improvement of their procedure. He rejected the guillotine as a possible remedy. The remedy which attracted him much more was the plan of selecting Amendments. He would allow the House to discuss a Bill quite freely, subject to this, that by some means or other the really vital Amendments should be selected for discussion.

MR. ASQUITH: By what means?

LORD R. CECIL said that one of the means suggested was, he feared, impracticable, because nobody would carry it out, and that was the appointment of an impartial Committee which should select the Amendments to be discussed. He did not think that that would be an impossible proposal, but he recognised that it would be very difficult indeed to appoint the impartial committee. He had made the suggestion himself on the occasion of the last guillotine Motion, that it should be done by the leaders of the various parties, with their responsibility to the House at large and to the public, and in that way he believed that they would get a fairly impartial committee. But the Prime Minister and his right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition would not serve on such a committee, and no doubt they had excellent reasons for that decision, which, however, put an end to his suggestion as a practical one. Another proposal which had always seemed to him to be worthy of consideration was that the House itself should select what Amendments should be discussed. That could be done by applying the principle of proportional representation in the selection of Amendments. Supposing that they had this rule, that no Amendment should be discussed unless it was proposed by a certain number of Members, say ten Members, and that no Member of that House should be allowed to propose more than one Amendment, the result would be that each Party in the House would select for themselves what Amendments they really desired to discuss. They would then arrange with their friends, which could be easily done, that certain Amendments should be put down, each of them proposed by, say, ten Members. The result would be, for instance, that the present Opposition would be entitled to fifteen or twenty Amendments, and the Irish Party to eight.

AN HON. MEMBER: To each clause or to the Bill?

LORD R. CECIL said to the Bill. It might be settled by the Resolution how many Amendments should be allowed, and they might be allotted among the different parties. In that way they would really confine the discussion to those Amendments which the parties really desired to discuss, and which were really thought of importance. There was a good deal to be said for that suggestion. He was not satisfied that even that exhausted the possible remedies for the present state of things. He should himself desire to see considered carefully a proposal for a greatly increased power of closure. The ordinary closure—on the Second Reading of a Bill, for instance—worked exceedingly well. It was very rarely applied till a proper discussion had taken place, and it worked as well as any proposal for the limitation of debate could work. He acknowledged the difficulty of applying the closure to proceedings in Committee, especially when, as in this case, there were 1,000 Amendments, but he was not satisfied that that could not be done. He hoped that anybody whose duty it was to lay proposals before the House would consider some such plan as to allow the Member in charge of a Bill, provided a Resolution of urgency had been carried, to propose the closure on his own responsibility without requiring the assent of the Chairman at all, at any time, about any Amendments. On the whole he believed it was much better now that they had got as far as they had to put the responsibility directly on the Government for limiting each particular debate. He did not believe that any Minister would venture to propose the closure on an Amendment which was unfair or contrary to the general sense of the House. It would not be safe for him to do so. The way it would work would be that when an Amendment which was not worth serious discussion was proposed, the Minister would reply very shortly and would instantly propose the closure. That would be carried and they would pass on. When they got to a serious Amendment which the House generally desired to see discussed, and which raised a really serious question, the Minister would be bound to allow it to be discussed properly. He would like to see the matter considered, but he recognised that the difficulty that they laboured under—and he thought it very serious and very dangerous—was that the House was losing its self-respect. He believed the future historian of the Constitution would find no more interesting topic than the gradual decay of the corporate self-respect of the House of Commons. It was deliberately, intentionally, and avowedly begun by the late Mr. Parnell, who openly set himself to destroy the House of Commons and render it impossible, as a means of putting pressure on the House to grant Home Rule for Ireland. He profoundly regretted it, but he thought any impartial student of history must admit that what Mr. Parnell attempted to do had been very largely accomplished. They could not now trust to the common sense and common feeling of the House of Commons to put a stop to undesirable discussion. The real problem which ought to be considered was whether there was not some means by which the self-respect of the House of Commons could be restored. It would not be restored now, whatever it might have been, by the exile of the Irish Members from the House. The matter depended on the whole feeling of the House, and unless it was predominant in every quarter of the House they could not rely on the feeling of the House putting an end to what was roughly called obstruction, or undue debate. He had served a good deal on the Grand Committees during this year and had been struck immensely with the very different feeling that there was in these Committees. He was dealing, of course, with non-controversial measures. The object of everybody who spoke was genuinely to convince the Committee.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Did the noble Lord attend the Committee on the Irish Universities Bill? There never was such obstruction as obtained there.

Lord R. CECIL said he was referring to non-controversial measures. The Children Bill for instance, was a measure of great complication and difficulty, and it was discussed very thoroughly, honestly, and fairly right through, and the speeches were made in order to put forward some view which the speaker thought the Committee ought to consider, and which might have an influence on the Committee's decision. He would not say that no useless speech was made, but he believed it would be nearly true to say that no consciously useless speech was made. Why was that? Partly, no doubt, because it was a non-controversial measure, but very largely because the speeches were made to the people who had to give the decision. One of the great difficulties of the House was that the speeches were made to one set of people and another set of people decided, and it was absurd to suppose that there could be any real objection in making an obstructive speech if, in point of fact, however much they Parliamentarily behaved themselves, the decision would not rest with those who were there but with others who were on the Terrace or in the smoking-room. He was not satisfied that it would not be a very desirable change to assimilate the procedure of the House to procedure in Grand Committee, and say that only those who had heard the debate should take part in the divisions, or only those present when the question was put from the Chair. He would deplore it if the House generally adopted the view of the Prime Minister that the guillotine was absolutely inevitable and that there was no other alternative. He believed that was untrue, and that proper consideration of the matter would reveal some other method of dealing with the difficulties under which they laboured. This perpetual resort to the guillotine in order to get through one particular measure had all the evil of an Act of Attainder. Let Members express in some way which would bring it home to the Government that it was essential that they should have a real permanent settlement of the question, and that it was the duty of the Government to present some permanent settlement of the difficulty, that if they passed this Resolution they must do so with clear notice to the Government that this kind of thing could not go on, and that they must have a setttlement which would meet not temporary difficulties or assist party legislation, whether Unionist or Liberal, but do something to restore to the House of Commons its liberties, and still more its reputation, which he feared had been gravely compromised by the proceedings of the Government.

*MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.), in seconding the Amendment, said he had never yet taken any part in any discussion having reference to procedure. But as a private Member, and perhaps the most unattached private Member on that side of the House, he could not sit still and watch the growth of a system which, to his mind, was reducing the position of private Members to that of Parliamentary marionettes. He did not speak in any spirit of hostility towards the Prime Minister or this particular Government. The evil had been growing for the last twenty years and was undoubtedly on the increase. The obvious answer might be that under the present Government a good many more Bills had been introduced than was the case under the last Administration. But these were matters of domestic interest and did not concern the private Member. What did interest him was the amazing apathy of the ordinary private Member to his privileges, rights, and duties, and also to his dignity and self-respect. Every private Member was entitled to look upon himself as a potential occupant of the Treasury bench. It was supposed to be their duty to scrutinise every Estimate which came before the House, but when he saw year after year fifty or sixty millions of money voted without a word of discussion he began to ask himself whether or not the institution of representative government had not become a farce. The scrutiny of the national expenditure was one of the special prerogatives of the House. The present system was a violation of the first principles of popular government. He was not going to follow the noble Lord in the very interesting proposals he had made for removing the present deadlock, but if he might be allowed to throw out one suggestion it was that the Prime Minister should refer the whole subject to half-a-dozen business men, who in half a day would formulate proposals which would relieve the House from the conditions under which it worked, and the indifference with which it was regarded by numbers of people outside. The Prime Minister had introduced a measure of first-class importance, so important that he told them only a week or two ago that although it might involve the fall of his Party it would be well worth the sacrifice. Therefore, according to the Prime Minister they had before the House a Bill which involved the very existence of the present Government. He would not now encroach upon the privilege of debate by discussing the merits of that measure in any way, because that was quite beside the mark, but by this Resolution the Prime Minister was, by inference, saying to the House of Commons: "I have reason to believe that unless I make provision in advance there will be such an abuse of the rules of our procedure in this House that we shall not be able to pass this measure during the present session." Surely such a Resolution constituted a very grave reflection upon the power and dignity of the Chair. What right had the Government to come forward and by artificial means of this kind endeavour to prevent them exercising their rights? He found that Standing Order No. 19 provided that—

> "Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the House, or of the Committee, to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition of his own arguments, or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech."

That being the rule, he asked the House to say that that was a sufficient protection against the abuse of the rules of debate, and every hon. Member had a free and unfettered right to express the views of his constituents. He thought the time had arrived when private Members, irrespective of party, should insist upon their right to have their proper share in shaping the legislation of the country. No doubt party loyalty was a desirable thing, and it might be a virtue, but it had now degenerated into a fetish, involving the sacrifice of their self-respect. Although he was reluctant to be constantly uttering discordant notes from that side of the House, he could not help feeling that if they could only throw off the sense of slavery to the official Parties and Whips they would all join in urging upon the Prime Minister that the proper solution of this question was to appoint a small Committee of the House to deal with the whole question of procedure. He wondered when any Government would be sufficiently courageous to say: "We will introduce no legislation for one session; we will deal with the business of the country." The noble Lord had said that the function of the House was to discuss measures, but in his opinion its function was to do the country's business. It would be an enormous relief to the country if some party in appealing to the electors would undertake that for one session at least they would introduce no new legislation at all, but would devote themselves, if returned, to the financial business of the country. He believed a party which promised to do that would come back with a striking majority. He thought such an innovation would come with enormous relief to the country, for we had too much legislation. He did not intend to put any obstacle in the way of the right hon. Gentleman carrying his Resolution if it was absolutely necessary, because he was not in favour of wasting time in taking divisions simply that hon. Members might have the privilege of telling their constituencies that they had taken part in so many divisions. He was anxious that every private Member should realise that he was gradually becoming a mere automaton in the House and that he might just as well sit at home and register his vote by telephone. He hoped that the result of the discussion would be that the Prime Minister would assure them that if they allowed this wretched proposal to go through once more the time was very close when they would be invited to see if they could not find some remedy for the present deadlock. He was utterly opposed to the proposal of the hon Member for Appleby that they should have all-night sittings. Indeed, he was surprised at such a proposal from such a quarter, for he could not help remembering that upon the occasion of the only all-night sitting which he had himself attended—and the only one which, for that matter, he intended to be present at—most of the temperance Members were *hors de combat* at an early stage in the proceedings, owing doubtless to the absence of the artificial stimulant which they were prevented by conscientious scruples from availing themselves of during the silent watches of the night. He also strongly objected to the system under which Members were invited to pair "for" or "against" the Government, irrespective of what particular measure might be under discussion. Indeed he regarded the signing of those sheets which were always exhibited in the lobby as inconsistent with the self-respect and independence of a Member; and he urged the Prime Minister to consider the importance of at once devising some means of relieving the House from the tension under which its work was at present carried on. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out all after the words 'That,' and to add the words 'this House declines to continue the practice of passing Procedure Resolutions to deal with the later stages of particular Bills, and calls upon the Government to lay before it proposals for settling the procedure of this House on a permanent basis.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the end of line 4, stand part of the Question."

MR. ASQUITH: The noble Lord at the beginning of his very interesting speech declined to go into the question which was raised pointedly by the Leader of the Opposition, and which I myself brushed aside as irrelevant to this discussion—namely, which of the two Parties in the House was the more responsible for what he regards as the degradation of our procedure. I will not accept the invitation offered by the Leader of the Opposition, and go into that question. I do not think either Party would come out extremely well if the test of their merit were a test of absolute consistency. I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of making one quotation. The right hon. Gentleman quoted some language used by me in the year 1904—a very recent date, a date so recent that it seems almost impossible that any one could, I will not say change but modify his opinions in so short a time. But let me see what was the opinion expressed in this House on 5th July, exactly a year after my speech, by the right hon. Gentleman on the Aliens Bill—perhaps, the worst of all instances of the abuse of our procedure. The right hon. Gentleman said,—

"I myself hold the view that such Resolutions as that which I am now proposing, and which have been proposed by me on previous

> occasions and by my predecessors, are an inevitable part of the present machinery of Parliament, and that their adoption will be found necessary by my successors as they were found necessary by me."

We are only fulfilling that prediction, and justifying the prophecy of the right hon. Gentleman himself. He said something as to the comparative number of the occasions upon which this principle had been resorted to under one Government or another. Yes, but in these matters *non numerandum sed ponderandum est.* You have not to consider the exact number of the occasions, but the justification for them. I am quite content to rest my justification for this proposal on the comparison of what the House is asked to do to-day when the House is being given ample time for the discussion of every one of the contentious points which are likely to arise on every stage of this Bill, with what was done on the Licensing Bill of 1904. I will summarise what was done upon that occasion. I am quoting from my own speech on the Third Reading. I said—

> "There are 264 lines in the Bill as it appears after consideration on Report. Of these 264 lines, fifty-four only have been discussed either in Committee, or on the Report stage. That is to say, 210 lines out of 264, or four-fifths of the entire Bill, have been left completely undiscussed, and in these 210 lines Government Amendments have been introduced without consideration or debate to the amount of 105 lines, or exactly one-half."

That is what I call an oppressive use of the guillotine, and it justifies the language of the noble Lord when he said that such Resolutions might be used to withdraw from the consideration of the House matters on which they are entitled to express an opinion. I have endeavoured to show that on these two occasions, one after another, we are obviating the possibility of any such abuse as took place in 1904. The noble Lord made an interesting and ingenious speech, but what is the conclusion the House is to draw from it? No one admires these guillotine Resolutions. Everyone would like to get rid of them and see some other method adopted which would result in reasonable and not excessive discussion with regard to the really important points in connection with Bills. May I say here parenthetically that one of the reasons why there has been a more frequent resort to this method of procedure, since the present Government has come into power, is that we are really making a serious attempt to overtake arrears of legislation? It is a very easy thing, when you are introducing a small number of Bills each session, to claim credit for having abstained from any drastic measures to secure the passing of those Bills into law. But when you have a majority in the House of Commons who are earnestly intent on carrying into effect as much legislation as time and strength will allow, it is inevitable that you will have to resort to the guillotine, which under conditions of more sterile legislation would not be needful. I assure the noble Lord that I do not under-value in the least either the strength of his objections to the existing system or his desire to improve it, if we can come to some general agreement on the point and provide a more desirable substitute. But when you come to look at the substitutes which the ingenious mind of the noble Lord himself could suggest, is there a single one or a combination of them which, in the opinion of the majority of the House, would not be worse than the guillotine? I confess I think so. He suggests an impartial, disinterested tribunal, which is either to determine the question whether there is to be an allocation of time at all or to pick and choose by some process of discrimination between the relative importance of different Amendments. That is a body the composition and setting up of which is, so far as we can see, a counsel of perfection, and an unattainable ideal. Nobody has ever been able to give effect to this suggestion. The noble Lord suggests a far more arbitrary interference with the rights of private Members than any guillotine I have ever heard of. He actually suggests that a Member should receive priority according to the number of people who back him. I do not know whether I am quite accurate in stating that no Amendment under his proposal should be considered which had not ten people behind it, and not one of those ten people would have the right to move any other Amendment. That is an interference with the rights of private Members and with the rights of minorities. There was a time when Mr. Gladstone on two or three occasions in connection with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851 stood against both front benches. Everybody now knows that he was right, but the noble Lord would not allow a single Amendment in such a case. I do not think that is a practical suggestion, and I doubt very much whether, if he were to canvass his own friends, he would find substantial support of it. My hon. friend who has just sat down has an ineradicable idea that Members should not take part in a division unless they take part in the debate. That is a still more flagrant attempt to deprive Members of the privileges of this House. The hon. Member for Hackney supplements it by a further proposal that the arrangement of pairing for and against the Government is unworthy of the self-respect of Members. Yet, in the days of Charles I. and a good deal earlier, and during the palmiest days of this Assembly, the habit of pairing was already well established, and I do not believe that the House is in the least degree likely to discontinue it. The truth is that the more you examine, scrutinise, and analyse these variously competing and mutually destructive suggestions, the more you realise—what everybody who knows anything about procedure knows—that there is no more heavy task than that of adjusting the ancient machinery of a House like this to modern requirements. For my part, I have witnessed a great many attempts now for more than twenty years, by statesmen of the greatest experience and responsibility, and all of them alike devoted to the dignity and self-respect of this House, which I do not think has in the least degree suffered in our time. Having seen many attempts made, none of them wholly satisfactory, most of them highly unsatisfactory, I come back to this, that with the conditions under which we live, the only practical way is that you must definitely allocate the time as between the different parts of a Bill and establish a proportionate distribution of the time so allocated. If you do that with a scrupulous regard to the rights of minorities and with an honest desire to see that the points on which the majority of the House are interested are adequately discussed, I believe we have done all we really can do to make the legislative work of the House really effective. I trust the noble Lord will not press his Amendment to a division. I am not at all surprised that it is hailed with enthusiasm by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, who really honestly believes that this House comes here not to legislate, but to abstain from legislation, and he welcomes any attempt, from whatever quarter it comes, to carry out that view. [AN HON. MEMBER: What about his Wild Birds Bill?] Happily none of us is absolutely consistent in this imperfect world. Even the hon. Baronet nods sometimes. But with the exception of his view as to a Bill for the protection of the dumb creation, the hon. Baronet's ideals of the House of Commons are that we should pass no laws of any sort or kind. That is not the view of the present Government, and therefore, if we are to be a really efficient law-making Assembly, I think I must ask the House on this occasion to reject the Amendment.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): The right hon. Gentleman began by telling us that he did not rise for the purpose of continuing the discussion of the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I was rather disappointed when I discovered that the right hon. Gentleman had been engaged in a laborious study of the volumes of *Hansard* since the Leader of the Opposition spoke, and that all he was able to produce was one quotation from a speech made by my right hon. friend in 1905. That quotation does not in any way alter or detract from the statement of my right hon. friend, namely, that the use of the guillotine as part of our procedure ought not to be followed except under certain conditions and circumstances. The right hon. Gentleman has ignored altogether the elaborate statement made by the Leader of the Opposition in which he explained that during our tenure of office it was only under certain conditions, where there were clear and manifest indications of obstruction, that these measures for dealing with it were adopted. The Prime Minister said that under the proposals of the Government there would be ample time for the discussion of the provisions of the Bill, and he defended the Government on the extraordinary ground that they were making for the first time practically a serious attempt to deal with the arrears of legislation. I venture to say that, however successful the legislative proposals of the Government may be, they will not exceed either in merit or in quantity, unless we sit continuously, the legislation for which my right hon. friend and the Unionist Government were responsible between 1895 and 1900, during which time these closure Resolutions were not adopted on one occasion. If the Prime Minister were to refresh his memory he would find that the legislation passed during that period has been effective, and it is news to be told that there is too little of it. We were constantly told when we were in office that the House was being forced to do too much work, and that in the circumstances it was impossible to do it satisfactorily. There are two novel changes in the policy of the Government which ought not to escape the attention of Parliament. One is that under this system it becomes the business of the Minister in charge of a Bill, and in a certain degree of the draughtsman of a Bill, to prolong the length of clauses, and to put into one clause what on previous occasions would have been put into two or three clauses. The only precedent which the Government can give us is a Bill which was passed in our time, and for which I was responsible. In that Bill there was one clause of eight or ten sections. But if anyone will impartially examine the Bills of to-day as compared with those of previous years, he will find that the tendency is to make clauses longer. That naturally follows from the wholesale system of closure by compartments. It is easier to get through a Bill under this system when the clauses are long. The Prime Minister says that ample time is given, and a fair distribution made, but he has ignored altogether that the Government, for the first time under this closure Resolution, and in the preceding one in regard to the Old-Age Pensions Bill, have taken power to compel the Chairman to put to the House not separate clauses, as used to be the practice, but groups of clauses, thereby placing the Opposition and private Members in an extraordinary and novel position, and, as I think, a most unfair position. A group, containing as many as four or five clauses, is to be put from the Chair. There may be one or two of these clauses to which hon. Members are strongly opposed. The new procedure of the Government compels Members to vote against a group of clauses *en bloc* though they may only object to one of the clauses, or part of a clause.

MR. ASQUITH: I am quite prepared to abandon that provision. It is only intended to apply to clauses to which there are no Amendments, and in order to save the House unnecessary divisions; but if the right hon. Gentleman objects to it I will abandon it, and each clause will be put separately by the Chairman.

MR. WALTER LONG: I am very much obliged to the Prime Minister. I am sure that the concession will be very greatly appreciated by my friends on this side of the House. I will say no more on that matter, but add one word as to what fell from the Prime Minister with regard to the Amendment of my noble friend. The Prime Minister pointed out, what was obvious, that the the adoption of the Amendment would postpone the decision of the House on this particular Bill to a time so distant as compared with the present that it could hardly be regarded as practical, and he appealed to the House not to divide; but I would point out that this is the only opportunity we have of expressing our general view, held largely on this side, and I believe more largely held by hon Gentlemen opposite than would appear from any debate on the subject, viz., that the present position is wholly unsatisfactory. If we are to abridge debate and to pass a large measure by closure by compartments, we must have a different method of dealing with it than that which enables the Government not merely to fix the time, but to apportion that time among the different parts of the measure. On a similar Resolution dealing with the Old-Age Pensions Bill, I said that the Government must have the control of its own time if it is to be responsible for its own business, and, therefore, it was for the Government to say how much time ought, in their judgment, to be given to particular measures; and having done that, if the House disapproves of them, it can get rid of them. But it is a very different thing when we come to the distribution of the time which the Government allows to be taken in this particular case. At present, having decided that twenty-five days shall be given for the remaining stages of the Bill, they proceed to allot the time themselves and how that time shall be given; and that is where the weak points of the practice come in. It is consequently necessary that the House should affirm some such proposal as that made by my noble friend. I largely agree with the Prime Minister in what he said in regard to that Amendment. I was somewhat startled by some of the suggestions of my noble friend; for it appeared to me that they interfered with the rights of debate in a more drastic manner than at present exists. Hon. Members opposite, with their large majority, cannot be expected to vote against the Government; and although they would not adopt the Amendment of my noble friend, I am sure that his Amendment ought to be considered, because it is the only opportunity we have of saying, in whatever quarter of the House we sit, that this method cannot be continued. My noble friend showed that under the strain of this Parliament closure by compartment has been used to an enormous extent, and more frequently than ever before. However clamorous hon. Gentlemen opposite are for legislation, and anxious that Bills should be passed rapidly, they cannot desire to turn the House into a mere machine of which the handle is turned in order that a large number of measures may be passed without a due regard to the qualities of those measures, and without adequate consideration. I sat through the debates on the Old-Age Pension Bill, and I venture to say that no Bill has ever left this House bearing upon it more strongly the imprint of want of time for its consideration. We know that the Government themselves were prevented by the operation of their own Order from dealing fully with some of the points raised in the debate. On one occasion the closure fell when the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself was explaining some of the difficulties in which he found himself. It was only during the progress of the debate that the Government themselves realised the full force of some of their proposals, and the absolute necessity of some alteration. If that were the case in regard to the Old-Age Pensions Bill, how much more certain it will be with regard to the Bill we are now considering, some of whose clauses deal with matters and make proposals which ought legitimately to form the subject of quite separate enactments? Some of the clauses deal with eight or nine different subjects which entirely alter the law, and give wide powers to magistrates and other bodies like the New Commission; several clauses deal in the most drastic way with certain reforms; and yet we are going to deal with them under conditions which make it impossible to have free debate. I have been responsible myself in more than one Department over which I have presided for much legislation, and I say without hesitation, that it is possible and easy to carry many Bills through the House without any such pressure as that imposed by the motion submitted to us to-day by the Prime Minister. The present position is due to the desire of the Government to pass more legislation than any House of Commons can be reasonably called upon to consider in one session, and also, I believe, to the fear that this Bill will meet with such violent opposition as will make its passage impossible. What I say is, that if it is inevitable that some means must be found in order to expedite our business, and give the Government full control over the time of the House, the Government ought to be confined to the selection of the time, and should leave it to some other tribunal to decide what time was to be given to the respective parts of the Bill. I believe there is no body appointed by this House which has done its extremely difficult work with so much satisfaction to all parties as the Committee of Selection. It is appointed in a peculiar way, and is drawn from men of great experience; and up to the present time they have felt themselves bound in the exercise of their powers to forget altogether party ties and party considerations, and to do their best to administer their responsible duties to the general satisfaction of the

House. I cannot believe it is impossible for the House to find some more satisfactory machinery for the disposal of its time, either by the Committee of Selection, or by some other body. It cannot be impossible to devise some method by which the allocation of the time of the House can be made in the general interest of the House. That cannot be done by the Government. How can the Government do it? They think that their legislative children are better than other people's children, and they wonder that there should be any objection to them on the part of the Opposition. I venture to say that no Minister has ever introduced into the House a controversial Bill, a Bill of difficulty—I do not refer to small Bills—however much time and attention he and his colleagues may have given to its preparation, without realising, as it went through, that there were many things which had been overlooked, that there were many new aspects in which it should be regarded, and that there was a great deal to be said in justification of the views of the Opposition. It is not impossible, in my opinion, that the ingenuity of Parliament and of Ministers should find some procedure by which the time of the House may be allocated more satisfactorily than the Government can do it. If something of the sort is not done there will not only be a revolt in the House against an oppressive tyranny, but the people outside will hold that we are betraying their best interests and are asking them to be bound by laws which are passed without due consideration.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) said there had been many interesting speeches, and he was in agreement with a great deal that had been said by the Leader of the Opposition, by the noble Lord, and even by the hon. Member for Hackney. But he was going to vote against the Amendment of the noble Lord, and in favour of the Allocation Motion before the House. He did that with great reluctance. Nobody in the House disliked and hated the guillotine more than he did; but he wanted to get on with the business of the House and the country, and was told by both sides that there was no other way of doing it than by the use of the guillotine. Mutual recriminations and reciprocal quotations cast across the table by past and present Ministers, showed that the weapon of the guillotine had been adopted by both sides of the House. Without attempting to apportion the exact degree of responsibility or the blame of resorting to the guillotine, they might consider it not as a party question and not by quarrelling with one another as fools, but as Members of the House of Commons. Hon. Members opposite, above and below the gangway, were, after all, his colleagues in the House. He hoped that all Members respected and loved the House of Commons and desired to maintain its best traditions; and, if it had deteriorated in late years, to restore if possible the character and power it had formerly possessed. He, therefore, would invite his colleagues on both sides of the House to consider whether this instrument which they all disliked could not be put an end to, and an alternative devised which would make it unnecessary. The right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken had suggested the appointment of a Committee, similar to the Committee of Selection, which should allocate the time of the House; and the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone had made proposals which appeared to him to be novel, and, notwithstanding the source from which they had emanated, revolutionary. He was reminded that this instrument about which they were all talking had originated with an enemy of the House of Commons—with his friend Mr. Parnell, a man for whom he had profound respect, and with Mr. Biggar. Whatever their share in the authorship of the closure, these two men were avowed enemies of the House of Commons. They came there for the purpose of destroying its influence as a legislative Assembly; and they had largely succeeded by methods of obstruction ingeniously invented and persistently pursued. Both those Members had passed away, but their methods had remained and were practised, he admitted for the sake of argument, with equal reluctance by both parties in the State when in opposition. He had never been in opposition; but he promised the House that if ever he was in opposition, which was very unlikely—[OPPOSITION cries of "No"]—he was very glad to have that encouraging cheer from some of his opponents who thought that they on the Ministerial side were going to come back again to that side of the House. If ever he were in opposition, he promised he would not resort to this weapon of obstruction, because he believed it to be inimical to the welfare and reputation of the House of Commons. After all, they were there sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, but it was the House, its character, its traditions, and its future, they were concerned with. The only remedy for obstruction was not in those devices of the noble Lord, not in the methods suggested by the Prime Minister, but to get to where they were before the days of Mr. Parnell; once more to respect themselves and the House of which they were Members. After all, that was a great deliberative Assembly. They came there to discuss and try to persuade one another on subjects in which they were interested, and it was the business of men who were loyal to the House of Commons, loyal to their own self-respect, and loyal to their duty, to assent to the decision to which the House of Commons came. He believed it would be better if hon. Members on both sides were to try to put away from them the bad traditions introduced by the Irish Party in the days to which he had referred, when that party were trying to destroy the House of Commons and to prove that it was no place for them. He dared say that if he had been an Irishman he would have been one of them. He did not blame them in the least for doing what they did from their point of view. But hon. Gentlemen now in the House were friends of the House of Commons, and it was their duty to try and restore its character as a deliberative Assembly, and a place for full, free, and ample discussion of any subject brought before it. Another subject was referred to by the hon. Member for Hackney upon which he wished to touch. On the only occasion on which he had ever before taken part in a debate of this character, he was brought to book by the Speaker himself. He thought then, as he thought now, that a great deal of irrelevant matter and repetition was indulged in by hon. Members in their speeches, and with great respect to the Chair, he thought Mr. Speaker might be rather more severe and drastic in his attitude towards Members in that regard. Coming back to the Motion before the House for the allocation of time, he submitted that after the Government's promise that after impartial consideration in Committee they would seek out what was most controversial to deal with in the Report stage, and although this was a matter of great magnitude and importance to the country, nevertheless the allotment of thirty days for the discussion of this measure was not an ungenerous amount of time to give to it.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said the speech of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down was an earnest one and one to which the House had listened with considerable advantage. The only fault in it was that the remedy they looked for could hardly be found in anything which the hon. Member suggested. Although they might hope to get back to the almost pre-historic days of free speech so far as that House was concerned, they could hardly hope to get back to them in that way. He regretted that the Prime Minister seemed to object in the last words of his speech more decisively than he had done on previous occasions to any alternative proposal. On previous occasions he had given hope to the House that although he had been obliged to use closure by compartments as a temporary measure, he was turning over in his mind some better scheme of dealing with these matters. From what he had said that afternoon he appeared to have come to the conclusion that the guillotine was the only means by which he could hope to deal with the matter. The moment was favourable for an effort to find some better method, because at no time could it be proved that under the guillotine had the House worked well. At that moment there was a great opportunity for the Government to take the matter up. If that debate was compared with that for the allocation of time for the discussion of the Licensing Bill of four years ago, it would at once be seen how much greater was the advantage of the Government for dealing with the question. In 1904 great anger and acrimony were displayed, and the very first page of the report of that debate showed that Mr. Speaker had to intervene to calm the feelings of hon. Members. On this occasion everyone, from all quarters of the House, had debated the question coolly and calmly with a desire to find some better means of dealing with the matter. That being the case, it was a great opportunity for the Government to consider some other way of carrying on the discussions on large measures which came before the House. It would also be remembered that the Government were pledged to such a course. Two years ago the House debated the proposals of the Government with regard to procedure. They pointed out then that in all the ordinary cases the business of the House should be carried on by means of Grand Committees, but that the large and important measures should be reserved for the consideration of a Committee of the Whole House, That being so, it was a breach of the pledge given by the Government on that occasion if, whenever great and important measures came before the House, they, by means of the guillotine, cut off discussion. That left the House in a worse position than if these measures were discussed before Grand Committee. If the Government considered it right that these large measures should be considered by the House as a whole, then the House had a right to insist that the Government should keep to their pledge, and that they should not be allowed to interfere with the proper discussion of these great measures by the adoption of the guillotine rule. He did not think there could be greater proof of the necessity for proper discussion than the condition of things under the Old-age Pensions Bill. He was glad to see that the Government had receded from the position they took up in the Motion brought forward then. They brought in the Motion on that occasion before they had seen what Amendments had been put down to the Bill, but they had receded from that position, because, before bringing in this Motion, the Prime Minister, as he had stated, had considered the weight and importance of the Amendments on the Paper. Everybody must admit that no Bill brought forward by the Government as a first-class Bill—and the Old-age Pensions Bill was not even opposed in principle by any party in the House—had received greater changes in the short time it was in Committee than the Old-age Pensions Bill. If that was the result of its discussion under the truncated conditions under which that discussion took place, they could only imagine what would have been the result if it had been discussed without the guillotine. When they came to the time which had been allocated in advance by this Resolution, the Prime Minister had rightly admitted that he could not defend his allocation of time unless he could prove that he had given a proper time to arrive at a decision upon all the important points raised in this Bill. But a very little consideration of the Resolution would show that, though the Prime Minister believed he had allocated the time so as to provide for the proper discussion of all important Amendments, he had not succeeded in carrying out his purpose. He would point out two or three instances to prove that. On the Monday they were to enter upon the discussion of Clause 1, which was to be concluded in two Parliamentary days. In that clause cropped up the question of the fourteen years limit which must be dealt with in connection with the time-limit in Clause 3. The two things were closely connected and it was extremely difficult to dissociate them. The discussion of and decision on Clause 1 in this way must greatly interfere with the discussion on Clause 3. It was not on those two clauses specially that due consideration was not given by the Prime Minister to the time allowed. The Under-Secretary to the Home Department was shortly going to take part in the debate. He would call that hon. Gentleman's attention to the thirteenth day on which Clauses 18 and 19 were to be considered. Clause 18 dealt with Sunday closing. What time would be left after the discussion of that clause for the consideration of Clause 19 which dealt with the exclusion of children from public-houses? The hon. Gentleman was an expert and judge upon this matter. He had been conducting the Children Bill through Grand Committee. On more than one occasion he said he had left out this matter in dealing with the children because it was of a controversial character, and therefore he had decided to omit it as he desired to make the Children Bill an uncontroversial measure. He appealed to the Grand Committee to allow the question to be discussed in the House as a whole when it could be brought up in the form of a new clause. He desired to point this out, as it was so controversial a question that the hon. Gentleman would not discuss it in Grand Committee, and yet they were expected to deal with it in one day under the time-limit proposed by the Government. A still more striking instance was Clause 34 which was to be discussed on the fifteenth day. On that day they were to start with Clause 21 and to consider, all the intervening clauses before they reached Clause 34, which had created as much excitement as any of the many clauses in the Bill. He pointed out these instances to show that in the attempt of the Prime Menister to arrive at a satisfactory time-table there were many cases which it would be impossible properly to discuss, because they would be ruled out for want of time. He was extremely glad to hear from the Prime Minister that he was in favour of accepting the Amendment on the Paper with regard to the proposal to put all the clauses together, because if they were put together it would raise a considerable amount of feeling in the House. He would like to hear from the Under-Secretary for the Home Office what the Government's proposal with regard to the proceedings on Report really meant. As he read the Resolution, although it was suggested that they should have some power to decide how the time should be devoted on Report, as a matter of fact, the House would be merely called upon to consider another proposal of the kind that was now before them, and they would have no real power of indicating to the Government how they would like those five days allotted. He thought the Motion as to Report should only be taken on a subsequent day after the Government had had an opportunity of considering, through the usual channels, the opinions of the House generally, otherwise the new departure had no real advantage. The determination of the proceedings at half-past ten still further curtailed the opportunities for discussion, and he suggested that the Government might consider the desirableness of altering the hour, if not to eleven, at all events to a quarter to eleven.

*MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcester, Droitwich) said he would have supported the Amendment of the noble Lord except for the reason that he had no wish to postpone the discussion on the Licensing Bill. Indeed it might have been better for every one if a discussion of the measure had taken place before now. Neither did he wish to seem to be ungrateful to the Prime Minister, because if the House was to have a guillotine system, the right hon. Gentleman had made the most generous allowance in his power in respect of this particular Bill. But surely the House had arrived at the conclusion that a guillotine system was not only objectionable in itself, but a total failure as far as legislation was concerned. This had been demonstrated beyond question by their proceedings under the guillotine system in its application to the Old-age Pensions Bill. In common with the great majority of hon. Members, he was in favour of the old-age pensions scheme looked at in its broader aspects, but every hon. Member knew, and especially the Labour Members, that some of the more important considerations connected with that Bill had not been discussed and would not now be discussed before it became law. The question of the guillotine, indeed, was of first class importance, It touched more than any other question the vital interests of the House as a deliberative assembly. Everyone declared that the present system was intolerable, and every one agreed that it was shameful. But no practical suggestion had been made by the Prime Minister or by the other members of the Government to rid the House of the intolerable nuisance attaching to the use of the guillotine. The newer system of closure was better than the old; the go-as-you-please system was an even greater failure than the present system, leading to the interminable discussion of minor points and to the neglect of some of the most important clauses of a Bill. If they were to have closure by compartments it ought not to rest with the Government of the day to allocate the time, for he could imagine that a tyrannical Government in a degenerate age might choose what clauses it would have discussed or would not have discussed. He was glad to think that whatever party might be in power in the near future they were not threatened with that contingency, but it was possible that if the House of Commons continued to lose its self-control as it was now doing they might live to see a Government in power which would use the guillotine in that manner. He thought the solution suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin deserved far more consideration than it had received. He was not himself familiar with the work of the Committee of Selection, but he thought it was the experience of all the members that the Committees of that House were singularly impartial, and he was not at all sure that a Committee of that House, having a due proportion of Members of all parties, might not be able to settle this difficulty or at all events to render it less intolerable. It stood to reason that the Government would command the majority on such a Committee, but there again he appealed to the experience of hon. Members that even a powerful majority on a Committee was very chary of acting in anything like a harsh or arbitrary manner. Some fanciful suggestions had been made in order to relieve the House of Commons of the excesssive amount of oratory that fell to its lot. There were two fanciful suggestions that were perhaps worthy of some consideration. He was given to understand that in the United States Senate the speeches of members might in certain circumstances be taken as read and printed in the records of the House. He had none of his hon. friends in mind at that moment, but they had most of them heard speeches in that House that might well receive immortality in that way without making any tax on the time and attention of hon. Members. He had often thought, too, that those Members who wished to address their constituents through the newspaper Press might have one of the Grand Committee rooms allocated to them for that purpose. Sitting up there under the genial speakership of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, they might address their constituents without occasioning unnecessary fatigue to other Members. But seriously, there were some practical considerations that were surely worthy of attention. He was in agreement with the hon. Member who said that in any given year they had too much legislation in that House. He was himself, as a supporter of the Liberal Party, a glutton for legislation of the right kind, but he thought they had all had experience this year of too many first class Bills before them, and that was practically the only reason why so little time was allocated to the Old-age Pensions Bill. It had been suggested that Bills should be carried over from one session to another. There was also the greater solution, of which he did not despair, of the delegation of some of the legislative duties of that House to minor Legislatures in Ireland and Scotland. He thought that that would tend enormously to diminish the work in that House, because there had been sessions when practically the whole time of the House had been devoted to the affairs of Ireland and in some sessions a considerable time to the affairs of Scotland. Surely that was a practical solution. Was there no means by which the number of speeches that any Member might make might be curtailed? The hon. Baronet the Member for the City was not the only Member who favoured them too constantly. He thought some limit might be put under the Standing Orders to the number of times a Member might address the House on any clause or part of a Bill. He desired to make another practical suggestion, and that was some curtailment of the length of speeches. They were all unconscious obstructionists, because the House had drifted into a habit of loose and very often incoherent speech, and even right hon. Gentlemen did not always know exactly at which of their various perorations they ought to resume their seat. In the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill, five hon. Members in one afternoon, following one another, spoke an average of an hour and five minutes apiece. He was not saying that those speeches were not all worth the making, although he wished at the time that they had been made somewhere else, but what would they think of a parson if he preached a sermon of sixty-five minutes? He believed the only dignitaries of the Church of England who were by tacit consent allowed their hour, were the Canons of St. Paul's. It meant that those five Gentlemen occupied a time that might have served for the speeches of at least fifteen or sixteen Members, and he suggested that under Standing Orders some curtailment or restriction should be put on speeches. He was not in agreement with some hon. Members that further responsibilities should be placed on the Chair. He thought it would be an extremely invidious thing if the Chair were called upon to exercise such powers. One hon. Member had referred to the fact that there was under Standing Orders a power given to the Speaker or the Chairman to ask a Member who was indulging in tedious repetition to resume his seat, but the fact that that power was never exercised, or at all events, not in the last two and a half years, was proof positive that the Chair did not wish for such discretion. In conclusion, he thought the time had come when the Government of the day, acting with the full concurrence of the Opposition and other Parliamentary groups, should devise some means whereby they might rid themselves of this intolerable nuisance which they called the guillotine.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) said the Prime Minister had declared that these Resolutions were inevitable. If they were inevitable the right hon. Gentleman must accept the inevitable consequences of them, and by curtailing the powers of the House of Commons give greater power to the other branches of the Constitution—the Crown and the House of Lords. Hon. Members opposite must remember that some day there would be a great temptation for a new Government to improve upon the example they were setting. For instance, he believed that the carrying of a new Customs tariff would be a difficult thing, but what could be easier than to do so by simply putting the question "That this be the schedule to the Bill," and passing it through in a single day? He did not say that they would succumb to such a temptation, but they would have a distinct temptation to enforce their will and then dance a war dance over the prostrate body of a moribund Cobdenite minority. The Licensing Bill, less than any other, should be made the subject of such drastic closure proceedings. Here were a few of its most important points—the relation of the magistracy to the people, the relations of the magistracy to the Government, the power of local majorities to coerce minorities, the responsibility of Parliament for engagements entered into by their predecessors, the definition of property and valuable consideration in reference to taxation and expropriation, the limitation of the power of association, the differential treatment of different parts of the United Kingdom, the question of Sunday-closing, differential treatment between man and woman, and the position of the State as a monopolist purveyor. What would happen if a small local authority attempted to get these powers within its area. Take Cleckheaton in the Spen Valley division for instance. Supposing they were to emulate the Gothenburg system, and provide that the State should be the monopolist of the liquor traffic in that town, notices would have to be served, there would be a minute investigation by an impartial authority as to whether the Standing Orders had been complied with, there would be a Second Reading in that House, where the Bill might be thrown out on principle, then a Committee would be appointed to examine witnesses, including the local Member, who might be cross-examined as to his facts, and finally there would be the Third Reading. To their grandfathers, who framed their private Bill procedure, the principles of liberty and individual right were very dear, and any precedent which tampered with either was watched with the most jealous scrutiny; but now the Government in the course of twenty-five days proposed to set a precedent in public legislation which would not be possible in private legislation—a principle which would strike a deadly blow at the principles of liberty and property alike. This would probably be the greatest controversial Bill during this Parliament. The greatest controversial Bill of the last Parliament was the Education Bill, which occupied thirty-eight days in Committee. The then Prime Minister was never absent; he took an interest in every clause, and mastered every detail, and he got through the whole of the controversial part of the Bill without the use of the guillotine, and when it was brought into operation the present Prime Minister congratulated him on the way in which the discussion had been conducted, admitting that one clause on which eight days had been spent showed a remarkable improvement as a result of the debate. But the right hon. Gentleman did not give anything like eight days for any clause under the present Resolution. The policy of the Government was founded upon distrust of free speech and a wish to enhance the powers of the executive, and in this Bill he was afraid he could see a special animus in their procedure. There was a story of a late eminent Judge that he had no sense of right and wrong, but that he liked to see his bird rise fairly before he put up his gun to bring it down. In restricting this Bill the Government did not see their way to give a fair chance to those they wished to injure to bring forward all the arguments at their command. He had travelled in the East, and had heard stories as to the method of procedure adopted with regard to taxation by governments there. A Grand Vizier, or some other high authority, might say: "Here is a class—they are rich, they are powerless, they are unpopular, they are accursed in the sight of the mullahs, let us take their property, enrich ourselves with their spoil, and gag all those who would speak in their behalf." He was afraid that that was somewhat of the nature of the procedure of this Government. If this Bill was a measure of their charity the hon. Member for South Hackney would walk before them through the Celestial gates. Was this Resolution a necessity? A similar Resolution in 1904 was described by the present Prime Minister as an outrage. It could only be described as a necessity on one condition, namely, that they supposed that all Governments were dependent for their majority on the support of different sections who demanded as a right every year something or somebody to eat. That was not a good system, but it had advantages because each anthropophagous section would unite to run down the quarry in anticipation of the following meal. Supporters of the Government realised that they must unite because they had a fear of a common death at the polls, and as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said of the followers of the late Government, the result of that fear was that they huddled together in the lobbies for shelter, and when they were there they buoyed themselves up with an heroic determination that they would really hurt someone before they died. No doubt they had their moments of exaltation, when they admired the qualities of their leaders, the special gift of metaphor of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the adaptibility of the President of the Board of Trade, and the genial *bonhomie* of the Prime Minister; but for all that they knew their sun was past its noon, that the clouds were gathering over their horizon, and that if they had to make their hay they would have to make it quickly. He thought this Resolution would be carried by a large majority, because there was a stimulus behind it more potent than conviction, and that stimulus was the necessity of obedience to those to whom they owed obedience. That would influence the voting that day, because it was as true now as when Lord Salisbury said it from his place in Parliament in 1894, that hon. Members opposite were the slaves of a cruel organisation, and that as the ancient Persians fought of old, so would they vote that day—under the lash.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. **HERBERT SAMUEL**, Yorkshire, Cleveland) said that one would gather from the speech of the hon. Member that they had gagged their opponents and were only anxious for their blood in order to satisfy the cannibalistic propensities of their followers. If they took into account the time already given for the First and Second Reading stages of the Bill, and then the time to be provided for the Committee stage and the Report and Third Reading, from first to last the time of the House which would be given to this Bill would be the whole time of the House for six Parliamentary weeks. Surely a period of that extreme length should be ample even for the discussion of the many points of large importance which the Government fully agreed were included in this measure. Among the questions raised in the course of the discussion was that of the allocation of the five days which it was proposed to give to the Report stage, which was a new proposal and he thought would be regarded generally as an improvement. The Leader of the Opposition had suggested that their proposal that as soon as the Committee stage came to an end they should allocate the five days in the Report stage, was inadvisable, because at the end of a heated debate on a controversial Bill the House would not be in a position calmly to review and to realise the necessities of the Report stage. He could hardly imagine, however controversial the Bill might be, that after seventeen days discussion, *de die in diem*, in the months of October and November, the House would be in a condition of heat on any subject whatever. The last days of the Committee stage would be devoted to the more non-controversial matters included in the schedules, and he could not imagine that there would be any difficulty at the close of those proceedings in giving a calm and discriminating consideration to the allocation of the time on the Report stage. The hon. Member for the Ashford division of Kent had suggested that there would be no time to ascertain the feeling of the House as to the manner in which those five days should be distributed, but during the long weeks in which the Bill would be under discussion there would be ample time for the Government, through the ordinary means of communication, to gather views from the various quarters of the House as to which clauses Members desired should have preference on Report, and from that point of view the proposal of the Government for a new allocation on Report was not open to objection or criticism. The Government would put down a Resolution in good time in the last stages of the Committee stage for the allocation on Report. The hon. Member for the Ashford division had raised certain objections to the compartments into which the time had been divided by the Resolution. He disagreed with him entirely in thinking that on Clause 1 the Committee should desire to enter into the question as to what should be the number of years to be provided in the time-limit clause. Clauses 1 and 3 were wholly separate and completely different in that particular. There was no reason in the nature of things why precisely the same number of years should be inserted in Clause 1 for the reduction period as should be inserted in Clause 3 for the time-limit. The Government would very much deprecate any attempt being made to regard these two questions as necessarily identical or even necessarily connected, or any claim for unduly long time to be spent upon Clause 1, because the question of the number of years of the time-limit was one to which the House would desire to give special attention. The hon. Member had raised objection to the allocation of time on Clauses 18 and 19, pointing out that only one day was given to them, and that it was exceedingly likely the children's clause might be crowded out on the Committee stage. That was an eventuality which was, of course, possible. He hoped it would not take place; but, if it did, it was precisely one of those eventualities which they desired should be met by the allocation of time on the Report stage. He agreed that it was desirable that some time should be given to the discussion of the children's clause, and he had no doubt the Government would agree to make some alterations in its details; but he did not agree that there would be any drawback in including Clause 34 with a number of others on the fifteenth day. It was the one which dealt with the sale of liquor on passenger vessels, but its application could not be properly discussed on the clause itself. It must necessarily be discussed on the schedule which attached to the clause, and, if the hon. Member had any complaint to make in regard to that clause, it should rather be that the time given to the schedule was too short than that the business of the fifteenth day was too much. He thought it was desirable, on this matter, to state that the Government hoped to remove from the region of controversy Clause 34 and the schedule which attached to it, and before it was reached to be able to agree with the shipowners and others interested, in a reasonable settlement of the points in dispute. This had already been stated by the Home Secretary to a deputation of those concerned. He found that they did not object to reasonable restrictions being imposed on the sale of liquor on passenger vessels, and on the other hand the Government agreed that some Amendments might be desirable in that schedule. There was hope, therefore, before they came to that in Committee that such a settlement might be arrived at. If not, it was perhaps one of the matters which might have to remain open till the Report stage. He did not think it was desired that there should be a very prolonged sitting on the proposal before the House to-day, and he ventured to express the hope that they might soon come to a decision on the first Amendment.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said that the hon. Member, in reply to the complaint which had reached him from that side of the House that inadequate time was permitted to the discussion of the Bill in Committtee, had called attention to the allocation of time as provided in the schedule to the Resolution. He (Mr. Chaplain) had two things to say on this point. First of all, he desired to call attention to the very unusual method of procedure which had been adopted by the Prime Minister in laying the Resolution upon the Table. A more inconvenient time could not have been selected if it had been the desire of the Prime Minister to prevent hon. Members on that side of the House from having an edaquate opportunity of comparing the Resolution with the Bill and the Amendments which were upon the Paper. The Resolution was only issued yesterday, and for Members who, like himself, had an engagement to speak in the country yesterday afternoon, it had been absolutely impossible to give the necessary time to the study of the Resolution and to compare it with the Bill. Even supposing the hon. Member was right in his assertions and that the time permitted amounted to six ordinary Parliamentary weeks, it was by no means too much, and he would say it was quite little enough for the consideration of the Bill, which was no ordinary measure and which he did not hesitate to say was not one but two or three and probably four or even six Bills in one. It was idle and ridiculous to complain because they said that the time allotted for a Bill of this magnitude, involving such a great variety of issues, was by no means too much; indeed, in their opinion, it was not adequate for a proper Parliamentary consideration of a measure so intricate and involved and which raised such enormous issues. One thing was absolutely certain, and he challenged any hon. Gentleman opposite to deny it. There must and would be a number of the most important questions which would not only not be discussed, but would never even be reached at all. This was an intolerable position, and it had existed now for a considerable time. It seemed to him curious that under Resolutions of this kind submitted by the right hon. Gentleman some of the most important questions concerned in the different Bills with which they had to deal were invariably those which were never reached. His noble friend the Member for Marylebone earlier in the debate had called attention to the fact that this was shown most clearly in the Old-age Pensions Bill, forced through the House only the other day. Of the three questions of supreme importance in connection with that Bill, two were not only never discussed, but they were never even reached. They were not within two, three, or even four clauses of reaching them; and, upon the most important question of all in connection with the Bill, viz., whether the scheme should be contributory or non-contributory, the closure fell, after two speeches from that side of the House and one from the other side, and just as the hon. Member behind him was asking for some reply to the remarks of the previous speaker. Under these circumstances right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite could not be surprised if they stated, as their deliberate opinion, that the method adopted by the present Prime Minister with regard to the guillotining of measures was absolutely destructive of debate and was reducing legislation to nothing but an absolute farce. He was quite ready to admit that in these days some alteration in procedure was necessary and sooner or later inevitable, but he did not think it was for them on that side to point out what was most desirable in their opinion. They objected to the guillotine as applied by the present Prime Minister, and, after the speech of his right hon. friend, no one could have any doubt—it was absolutely undeniable—that the principle adopted now and as practised by the Prime Minister was totally distinct from the principle as practised by his right hon. friend. The guillotine had now become part of the ordinary procedure of the House without waiting to see what Amendments were placed upon the Paper. Without knowing whether Members on that side of the House intended to be obstructive or not in their opposition, the Prime Minister placed upon the Paper Motions, which, as he had said, reduced work and debate to a real farce. One reason why he said so was this. Whenever a Minister now was confronted with a particularly awkward question, and he found it difficult to answer—for instance, the other day when extraordinary want of information was displayed by the Treasury Bench with regard to the German system of old-age pensions—was any answer given or any attempt made to reply to the charge made against them? Nothing of the kind. A Motion for the closure was made. That was the way in which business was conducted in these days under the guillotine Resolution. The time had come, he thought, when all sides of the House acknowledged—and he had been delighted to hear the remarks of hon. Gentlemen opposite—that this procedure was becoming every day more and more injurious to the character and reputation of the House of Commons. Then, he supposed, they would be asked, what was the remedy for all this? The remedy, of course, was at once to devise some method of procedure less objectionable than that with which they were confronted. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite, unless his memory deceived him, were all parties to the pledge given to that House by the late Prime Minister not very long ago. The late Prime Minister had undertaken, on one occasion, to examine with the greatest care the whole of this question, acknowledging himself that the present system could not be permanent and was most undesirable, and that he would submit in due course some other method of procedure for the consideration of the House. Why had that never been done? In the general conduct of their business the present Government had not given the smallest indication that anything of that nature had ever been tried or attempted by them. ["Hear, hear."] The right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, said "Hear, hear." He thought that they had reason to complain, and to complain very greatly, and the House of Commons had reason to complain, after what they had heard from the Government's own supporters that afternoon, that no serious effort appeared to have been made at all in that direction up to the present time. Had the Government come to any conclusion or had they not? If they had, what a confession of impotence it was, and what a reflection it was upon the present House of Commons, constituted as it was to-day, Liberal Members being two-thirds of the whole House, that they were so incapable of either guidance or control, that the conduct of their business or the only means by which it could be carried out was by the use of the guillotine. That was what it really came to. Here they had the most powerful Government of modern days, supported by the largest majority in that House on record, yet the only way in which they could conduct their business, or get Bills through the House at all, was, as his right hon. friend remarked, by abandoning all safeguards and by making use of this most objectionable and, he would say, most detestable procedure now proposed by the Government as part of the ordinary and habitual procedure of the House. It was not for the Opposition to propose remedies to-day, but he would say this, that if they were to be driven to the guillotine at all, there would be no difference in the opinion of both sides of the House that it would be far preferable to have the principle of action adopted by his right hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, in the past, than to have this practice, which, as he gathered from the Prime Minister to-day, was to become their habitual procedure for the future. Under his right hon. friend it was not habitual;

it was only put in force when experience had shown that it was absolutely impossible to pass a great and necessary measure without resort to some practice of that kind. Could not right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite perceive where all this was leading them? As, he was sorry to say, one of the oldest Members of that House, and absolutely devoid of party feeling in this matter, he desired, if possible, to maintain and preserve their old traditions. Hon. Gentlemen opposite were always saying that they were in favour of the democratic principle. Could they not see that this practice of guillotining debate, if it became habitual in the House of Commons, would not only injure but destroy that principle? Every Resolution of this kind that they carried in the future would be neither more nor less than another nail in the coffin of the reputation and traditions of that House, whose dignity and prestige, since first he became a Member of it, he had always desired to see maintained in their old and full integrity.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said he did not propose to follow the right hon. Gentleman through the speech which he had just delivered, but he might be allowed to express his regret that the right hon. Gentleman had not afforded them this treat in the last Parliament, when some of these closure Resolutions were being proposed, and that he should have reserved to the present occasion his eloquent, virile, and full blooded protest against the guillotine. He rose especially for the purpose of referring to some of the remarks which the noble Lord had made in moving his Amendment. Like the rest of his colleagues, he approached this subject, as all other subjects, largely from the Irish standpoint. The noble Lord early in his speech had dismissed the idea that they would find a solution of all the troubles complained of to-day in Home Rule, by stating that it was not a practical remedy; and the only reason which he advanced in support of that contention was that only a fortnight had been given this session to Irish and Scottish business. He ventured to submit that the noble Lord was not applying the true test in that matter. This was the Imperial Parliament, and how much time had it given to Imperial affairs this session? Take for example the enormous dependency of India. India was in a state of chronic famine, and to-day in a state of profound disaffection, according to some critics being almost on the verge of revolution. But how much time had been given in this session to the affairs of India? Then as to Scotland, he had heard Scottish Members complain in the past few weeks that only two days this session had been given to Scottish affairs, and certainly if he were a Scottish Member he would enter his most emphatic protest against such neglect of his country's interests. But the noble Lord, when he mentioned that fact, instead of advancing his argument in favour of the system which he advocated was advancing a conclusive argument against it. The fact of the matter was that the Parliamentary machine was clogged, and more time could not be given to the discussion of Bills until many of the powers now held by Parliament were delegated to other assemblies. There were Votes in the Estimates which, as every Member of that House knew, had not been discussed in that House for a period of ten years, and, that being so, it must be obvious to every student of Parliamentary procedure that some devolution was necessary. The delegation of the work of that House against which the noble Lord had protested had, as a matter of fact, proved very successful in this very session. The establishment of Grand Committees was intended for the delegation of business, and if the House would only consider for a moment what had gone on before those Grand Committees this session, they would receive an excellent object lesson in the necessity for the delegation of their powers. He had sat for sixteen days on the Scottish Grand Committee for the consideration of the Scottish Education Bill. The eloquence of the Scottish members had been inexhaustible. He never was associated with a wiser lot of men, but he did not want ever again to be on a Scottish Grand Committee. Supposing all these floods of Scottish eloquence had been let loose in the House, they would have got through nothing this session except the Scottish Education Bill. Then, again, he had the misfortune to be a member of

Standing Committee C, which was considering the Irish Universities Bill. They sat there for twenty days listening to a most interminable flow of talk.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): Chiefly from the Chief Secretary.

MR. J. MACVEAGH said the right hon. Gentleman was entirely wrong. The Chief Secretary never spoke except under provocation, and he got a great deal of it, because they had a long succession of speeches from two brothers, and as soon as one sat down the other bobbed up, and the Chief Secretary had to reply to the duet. Nobody could complain that the right hon. Gentleman the member for South Dublin talked much. He did not obstruct, and was so thoroughly ashamed of what was going on that he stayed away nearly all the time. He had to suffer on both those Committees, but he was too humane a man to desire to inflict the same suffering on the whole body of Members. If this delegation of powers to Grand Committees had not taken place the House would have done practically no business this year at all. He did not know how long the Children Bill occupied in Committee, but he knew there was no obstruction there. They could have supplied the right hon. Gentleman with a number of the most loquacious gentlemen from the Irish Universities Bill Committee. But further delegation of the work of the House was absolutely inevitable. The Mother of Parliaments could be better occupied than it had been on the past few nights in discussing the best methods of eradicating the bee pest in Ireland and how to catch whales off the Irish coast. An hon. Baronet entertained them for three quarters of an hour at midnight in describing how people were in the habit of catching whales on his estate in Scotland. He assumed it must have been a submarine estate. The noble Lord also complained that the manners of Parliament had considerably deteriorated because his great countryman Mr. Parnell had initiated obstruction. But he seemed to have heard of a Fourth Party in which one of the shining lights was a kinsman of the noble Lord himself—now the Leader of the Opposition. He proved himself a most apt pupil and displayed great capacity in obstruction. He was inclined to agree with the noble Lord that even in those dim and distant days when the Tory Party returned to power they were not likely to see any improvement in the methods of procedure. Imitation was the sincerest form of flattery, and he supposed the inheritors of the traditions of the Irish Party and its obstructive policy ought to feel flattered by the imitation which had been practised by successive parties since that time. He did not complain of obstruction. It would ill become him as a member of the Party which patented the system to protest against the obstruction which they witnessed now. But he complained of the clumsy, inartistic, and inefficient obstruction which was practised by hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway. He said nothing about the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London. He did it all right. When he got up they knew exactly why he got up, and he had certainly proved the validity of the claim which he advanced to the electors of the City of London as a reason for electing him, that he could talk on any subject at any time and at any length. But he did not weary the House and did not get called to order. He was afraid he could not say that about some other Members who supported him in his crusade. He had watched some obstruction performances with positive pain and with a feeling of shame at the degradation of an art which was once respectable. It had often occurred to him that it would be an excellent idea on the part of some of his colleagues to establish a night school to teach Members above the gangway the rudiments of obstruction. He had listened to the debate as to previous debates on guillotine resolutions, with mingled feelings. They had heard the same old arguments advanced, the same endless cycles of *tu quoques* from Members of the two front benches. They seemed to instruct their secretaries to ransack *Hansard* every time a motion of this kind was coming up and to get out everything said by members of the present Government against the guillotine and by those on the front Opposition bench in favour of it. There was one portion of the House which at least could claim to have been consistent, no matter what party was in power, in protecting free speech and in doing its best to defend the rights of private Members, and that was the party to which he belonged. He agreed with the noble Lord that Parliament now practically did nothing but register the decrees of the Government. They had had many alterations in procedure from year to year, but he doubted very much if they were any better off to-day in regard to progress in legislation than they were before all these innovations were introduced, and he was inclined to think there was as much legislation carried through the House when it was a free House as was carried now. He would be glad to believe that this would be one of the last of these Motions which would be submitted to the House. The time limit had its advantages. He did not agree with the hon. Member who had suggested as a remedy for this deadlock that they should have shorter speeches and fewer. Until they had Home Rule he was in favour of as many and as long speeches as could possibly be delivered, and he was not disposed to vote for putting the slightest check on the loquacity and garrulity of Members. But if a permanent system of guillotine or closure was to be established, or if it was sought to make this temporary expedient permanent, private Members would be fully justified if they insisted on the restoration to them of some privileges of which they had been deprived by preceding Parliaments. In his judgment the greatest blow that was ever struck at the freedom of the House was in the abolition of the right to move the adjournment of the House on any day on any question of public importance, and he did not think private Members had any right to be grateful to the Leader of the Opposition who was the inventor of that system. It was quite true that the privilege still lingered in an attenuated form, and Members who desired to raise a question of urgent public importance were free to do so at a time when the House was empty and everyone was away at dinner. If he were an Englishman he would take this point of view, that if they ceased to make the House interesting they weakened its influence and its prestige. The House was never more interesting than when any subject of public importance could be sprung upon it at any time without asking the consent of the Government in power. In the last Parliament the House was reduced to such a position of impotence and powerlessness that it actually was not allowed during the last few years of its life to discuss the one question above all others that was agitating the country, was being proclaimed and debated from every platform, and was forming the staple subject for every debating society in the three kingdoms. The one place where they could not mention protection or free trade was the House of Commons. He could not imagine that that was a dignified position to be occupied by the Mother of Parliaments. They had had many sets of new rules passed and many other changes had been effected. Did anyone think any private Member had a chance now of carrying any Bill or effecting any reform in which he was personally interested? Unless it was a Government measure he had practically no chance of seeing any social reform in which he was interested. It was his deliberate judgment that a member of a poor law board or a borough council had more power to advance the total sum of human happiness than any Member of the House of Commons. If they were to give away more rights they should insist on getting back some of the rights they had lost, and the most important of them all was the right to arraign this or any other Government at any time and upon any topic. The front benches were all the same. They both wanted to victimise the private Member. Whatever else they might differ upon they were agreed on that. If they were out to-day they expected to be in to-morrow, and they wanted to preserve all the privileges of front benches. Be the cause what it might, the proceedings of Parliament were beyond any doubt gradually losing interest in the country. It might be due in large part to the influence of the halfpenny newspapers which had set the custom of not reporting the proceedings in Parliament but of confining themselves to giving what was called a descriptive sketch. They had now reached such a stage that a great many of the newspapers would give a column any day to the recital of the views of Black Rod on the wearing of the kilt, but if the Leader of the Opposition made a speech of profound importance, giving his real views upon tariff reform, they would dismiss him with half a column. But whatever influence the halfpenny newspapers might have had in weakening the interest of the public in the proceedings of the House, above all other causes it was due to the automatic procedure which had been established, because everyone outside the House of

Commons knew now that when a Bill was introduced, that on a certain day and at a certain hour the House would proceed to a division, and that it would be carried by approximately the majority which the Government of the day happened to have. If he were an Englishman he would feel it his duty to aim at making the House in fact as it was in name, the Imperial Parliament.

*MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.) endorsed that part of the hon. Member's speech which referred to the attitude of the occupants of the front benches upon this subject. The debate was itself a further cause of some reproach in respect of gentlemen who occupied the two front benches, and from whom they had already had six speeches. This monopoly of the time of the House was the greatest affront that could be offered to what was termed the dignity of Parliament, and to the privileges and rights of private Members. He had seen the comparison made that the Leader of the Opposition had covered, by his speeches in the first session of this Parliament, 511 columns of *Hansard*, something like 100 columns more than was occupied by the whole of the speeches of the whole of the Labour Members. The frequency of speeches from the front benches tended to exclude those who had some right to take a small part in the general affairs of the Chamber. Soon after entering the House he had expressed his amazement to a distinguished member of the Government at the way in which time was wasted, and speeches made to no purpose but that of obstruction. To his greater amazement the right hon. Gentleman said, "But that is nothing to what we did in the last Parliament." So it appeared to him that the chief inspiration of many Members who were there to represent the interest of their constituencies was that party inspiration which inclined them to seek merely the triumph of their side regardless of the common interest and good of the community. Did anyone believe that the Old-age Pensions Bill, if they had had more time to talk about it, would have emerged from Committee a better Bill than it was? He did not believe it. It was not that they wanted more time to talk; they wanted a better disposition to do something for the common good. There were between sixty and seventy Amendments to the Finance Bill on the Order Paper, not one of which was carried. Did anyone believe that if they had had sixty days to discuss these Amendments the result would have been different? He was unconvinced upon the point. He accepted the principle of the guillotine because he felt that, whatever course they took to rearrange the procedure of the House, this limitation of time and allotment of given portions of time to given clauses of Bills was in itself a defensible and proper provision, and he did not believe it would be better to leave the House to a time of unrestrained talk on the questions before them. If they did so they assisted the triumph of the Opposition—of the minority in the place of the majority—and whether he was opposed to the minority or not for the time being, they must accept the decisions of the elected majority. He was not so much a respecter of Parliamentary form as to say they should have these frequent debates. Personally he was prepared to accept this view, that inasmuch as it was understood that they were there with their minds unalterably made up, and as the mere creatures of party machinery, they might be better occupied elsewhere than in delivering speeches which had been so often delivered to their constituents and to *The Times*. The principle of the guillotine Motion was already in practice in a somewhat limited and defective form in regard to the financial affairs of the country. So many days were allotted to Supply every year, and if it was proper for previous Parliaments to have recourse to the closure in respect to financial matters it could hardly be argued that it was improper to apply the same principle to licensing legislation. He thought that some portion of the available time should be given to all the Votes and all the Departments of State. It had been alleged that the House was attempting to do too much, and that seemed to be the chief peg upon which the Opposition were hanging their complaints. He supposed the Opposition were contrasting the legislation of the present Government with their own legislative inactivity during their long period of office; but in view of the great arrears of social and industrial legislation and the demands for improvements in the conditions under which the industrial classes worked, it could hardly be alleged that the House of Commons was attempting too much. He endorsed what had been said as to the trivial character of many of the things which were discussed, but the remedy for that was that all those little village-green topics should be removed to other bodies better fitted to deal with them. His view was that until they delegated many of those functions they would have to press even further the principle of this Motion and allot the time in a proper proportion to the different measures with which they would be called upon to deal.

*MR. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) said he was glad that the Prime Minister had made this Motion. He agreed with the statement quoted by the Prime Minister from the Leader of the Opposition that the guillotine arrangement must become more and more a part of the procedure of the House. This necessity arose from the very position in which they were placed. The House of Commons consisted of 670 members, most of them practised speakers, and some of them very fond of hearing themselves speak. The processes through which Bills very rightly had to go as the result of the experience of many generations, afforded a practically unlimited opportunity for obstruction by much talking. When they considered the great issues which were at stake in matters that came before the House they could understand that any weapons which Parliamentary usage allowed were quite legitimate to be used by those who were opposing the particular measure before the House. They could not blame the Opposition for trying to prevent the passage of measures embodying principles which were quite opposed to what they believed was for the good of the country. Not only that, but there were many great prizes attached to those in office. The occupants of the Ministerial benches divided many tens of thousands of pounds amongst themselves in the shape of salaries; but that was a small thing compared with the vast amount of patronage which attached to the Government of the day. Under those circumstances, it was perfectly certain that the more interest people took in public affairs the more decidedly and energetically would the minority, whichever side they belonged to, use every Parliamentary weapon available to them to prevent the progress of business and to discredit the Government. Under those circumstances the majority could not carry out its will unless they had some arrangement such as that which the Government were now asking the House to adopt in regard to this particular measure, and only in that way could the will of the majority be carried out. They looked to the Government of the day to carry out the wishes the people had formed. It was quite right that the Government should have the authority to assign the period of time during which a Bill should be discussed. If that power was used to carry through measures which were opposed to the wishes of the people, as was the case with the last Government, then they would be brought to judgment at the next election. That was what happened in the case of the last Government. They carried through some of their measures in the teeth of the wishes of the people, and they carried them through with the assistance of the guillotine. They were then put upon their trial before the country, and the people condemned them by returning a sweeping majority against them. The present Government were now trying to carry out the wishes of the enormous majority who were behind them, and they were pledged to the reversal of many things done by the late Government as well as to the introduction of many other new measures like old age-pensions. He thought they might depend upon the Government giving a proper amount of time to the discussion of measures before they passed them into law. One of the reasons why the guillotine was more necessary now than formerly was that a larger number of Members had been returned to the House prepared to take an active part in its business and in speaking, and therefore it had become more necessary to restrict the unlimited power of talking which was impeding progress. Mr. Gladstone in the great Parliament of 1868, the most fruitful Parliament of our time, used to force some of his measures through by sitting up all night. Mr. Gladstone's Administration was followed by the Conservative reactionary Parliament of 1874, and there was then no need for restrictive measures, because the aim of the Government was to do comparatively little. In 1880 when Mr. Gladstone again came into power, the Irish Party found in the forms of the House an instrument which they could use and which they used most skilfully by obstruction to render the carrying on of the business of the House impossible, and they used this instrument to call attention to the need of Ireland's having her Parliament restored. The result was that Mr. Gladstone was forced to introduce coercive measures in order to be able to go forward with his legislation. At the present time the country desired progressive measures, and in view of the unlimited power of obstruction which the rules of the House placed in the hands of the minority, it had become absolutely necessary to propose Resolutions of the kind they were shortly going to vote upon. Apart from that, there were some things that could be done to save the time of the House. [OPPOSITION cries of "Hear, hear."] The hon. Member for Chelmsford had introduced into the House a Bill for the shortening of speeches, and that was one of the things which he hoped would be done in this Parliament. They might save much time too by a quicker method of taking divisions. They might decide questions by standing up or having a show of hands, and then they would not waste such a vast amount of time going through the lobby. It was impossible, in his opinion, to carry out the wishes of the majority in the House and the country without such a Resolution as that of the Prime Minister, and with his whole heart he should go into the lobby in its support.

MR. KEIR HARDY (Merthyr Tydvil) said he was in complete sympathy with the Amendment of the noble Lord. But the Labour Party were placed in the dilemma of having to choose between curtailment of speech, in which they believed, or curtailment in the output of legislation. Placed in this dilemma they chose the lesser of two evils by supporting the closure Resolution, which was a distinct improvement upon anything they had hitherto had. They were groping their way by experience towards some better form of procedure for the regulation of their debates. He had, however, intervened for the purpose of raising a special and particular point. He had an Amendment down to limit the Committee stage of the Licensing Bill to seventeen days, which meant the saving of two days, his reason being the fear that in the autumn session some measures would be crushed out. In addition to the Licensing Bill there was the Scottish Education Bill, the English Education Bill, the Housing Bill, the Children Bill, and the Miners' Eight Hours Bill. The total amount of time available in the autumn was only forty-five days. In the event of its being found necessary to postpone any Bills, he asked for an assurance that the Miners Bill would not be sacrificed, promising in that event not to move his Amendment.

MR. ASQUITH said the Eight Hours Bill was, to a large extent, dependent on the progress made in Grand Committee before the adjournment. He hoped the Bill would go there next week, so that some substantial work might be done upon it before the House adjourned for the autmn recess. If the progress was satisfactory, there would be quite sufficient time left in the autumn session to pass it through its remaining stages. He could not give any definite pledge at present, but that was the hope and intention of the Government. On the other hand, he could not undertake to revise the whole of the time-table by substituting seventeen for nineteen days for the Licensing Bill. The Government did not think seventeen would be an adequate number of days to give to the Committee stage. He hoped the hon. Gentleman, after what he had said, would not press his Amendment.

Several Members rose to continue the debate, whereupon—

MR. ASQUITH rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 226; Noes, 101. (Division List No. 198.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.

Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F. L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,Rt HnSirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buxton,Rt. Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.PancrasW
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,MajorE.Martin(Walsall
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.Sir W.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt,Rt.HnL.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col.Sir Ivor(Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jackson, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Leese,SirJosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeagh,Charles(Donegal,E.
McCallum, John M.
McKenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
McLaren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
McLaren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launcestn)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meehan,Francis E.(Leitrim,N.)
Menzies, Walter
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Ponsonby, Arthur A.W.H.
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards,T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel,Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann,Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thorne,G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt.Hn.E.(Clackman'n
Wason, JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley,John Henry (Halifax)

Whittaker, Rt Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. McKinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Meagher, Michael
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Ratcliffe, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the end of line 4, stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 221; Noes, 101. (Division List No. 199.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Asquith, Rt Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, F.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E. Grinstd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.

Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone, RtHn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, RtHn. SirW. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philips, John (Longford, S.)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Ralphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, RtHn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (CityLond
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchest'r
Beach, Hn. MichaelHughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bottomley, Horatio
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dixon-Hartland, Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robt. (Lanark, Govan)
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Keswick, William

Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Micthell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY moved an Amendment with the object of providing that the guillotine closure should not begin on the days allotted for the Report stage of the Bill at 10.30 p.m., as proposed in the Motion of the Prime Minister, but at 11 o'clock. He said that 10.30 was a most inconvenient hour at which to end the debate. The Government might surely give this extra time to private Members on the discussions on the Bill. If the closure was not taken until 11 o'clock on each of the twenty-five days they would gain twelve and a half hours extra discussion. It might very well be the case that on the Report stage there would be only one or two divisions, and therefore he thought it was quite reasonable to expect that this Amendment would be accepted.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) seconded the Amendment. He did not anticipate that the Government would object to give this extra half-hour. It in no way interfered with the Government's plans, and did not encroach on their time.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 15, to leave out '10.30,' and insert '11.0.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That '10.30' stand part of the Question."

MR. ASQUITH said he did not think it was the general wish of the House that this Amendment should be adopted. The Government followed the precedent set by all previous Resolutions fixing the hour at which divisions should take place, namely, half an hour before the formal rising hour. That had been the invariable rule when such Resolutions had been passed. In consequence of the concession he had already made to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, whereby clauses instead of being put *en bloc* would be put *seriatim*, they might carry on divisions till two or three in the morning.

SIR F. BANBURY: No, no.

MR. ASQUITH said he was not at all sure the hon. Member would be in that amiable frame of mind when they came to the divisions. Past experience did not justify the supposition. It would be better to adhere to the invariable practice of the past, and allow the divisions to take place at 10.30.

Question put, and agreed to.

SIR F. BANBURY moved to omit the following paragraph:—"One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings thereon shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day." He said the object of this Amendment was to remove the operation of the guillotine upon the Third Reading. It might be that one day would be quite sufficient for the Third Reading. On the other hand, no one knew yet what would take place in Committee and on Report, and in view of the fact that, with all the goodwill in the world, the Government might have so allotted the time as to prevent hon. Members from dealing with points they wished to discuss, it might be necessary to have a certain amount of discussion on these points on the Third Reading.

*MR. SPEAKER: The House has decided by passing the first paragraph that the Committee stage, the Report stage, and Third Reading "shall be proceeded with as follows." The hon. Member proposes to leave out the paragraph as to the Third Reading. That would leave the first paragraph of the Resolution in the air. I do not think he can propose to strike out the paragraph relating to the Third Reading, because that depends on the first paragraph.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would move to omit "one" and insert "two." That he thought was a very modest request. The Licensing Bill was the most important Bill of this Parliament, and it was not immoderate to ask that the Third Reading should be given two days. There was no reason to anticipate obstruction on the Third Reading, indeed, there would be no object in anyone wishing to obstruct. In view of the fact that they were limited in all the other stages it was only reasonable that this very small extension should be conceded.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) seconded the Amendment. He did not think that hon. Members opposite fully realised the magnitude of the present Bill. Clause 20, for instance, which was to be discussed in Committee on the fourteenth allotted day, dealt with the employment of women and children on licensed premises, access to premises, sale of liquor on Sunday, the closing of premises during the day of polling for Parliamentary or Local Government Board elections, and other matters. All this was to be dealt with in one day. By the time the Third Reading was reached, there would be a great deal to discuss which had not been discussed on the previous stages.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 18, to leave out the word "One," and to insert the word "Two."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word "One" stand part of the Question.

MR. ASQUITH said the remarks made by the hon. Member would be quite appropriate to a demand for the extension of the time for the Committee stage or the Report stage of the Bill, but not the Third Reading stage. When the Government came to the conclusion, after careful consideration, that twenty-five days was the maximum time which, in view of the requirements of public business in the House of Commons and in another place, could be given to the various stages of the Bill, they proceeded to allocate that time in the manner they thought would be most convenient. Of all stages of a Bill the Third Reading was the simplest and least important. The Bill had been through Committee then, and it had been put in its final shape on Report, and all that could be done on the Third Reading was to repeat arguments which had already done service in Committee and on Report. As they could not give more than twenty-five days he thought the House would agree that one day was the maximum that ought to be allowed for Third Reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY moved an Amendment with the objection of providing that, instead of proceeding to discuss the proposals of the Government for the allocation of the proceedings on the Report stage on the night that the Committee stage was finished, the discussion should be taken on "a subsequent day." He was convinced, he said, that the procedure on this particular matter for the allocation of the proceedings on the Report stage was a proper one. He understood the object of the two hours debate which was to take place was to discover the opinion of the House as to what clauses were to be considered on Report. He suggested that in the interest of the proposal itself, and in the interest of ascertaining what would be the best way to carry on the Report stage, it would be better to take the discussion on a subsequent day. This was a new departure and it was one well worth trying. He moved the Amendment for the sake of peace.

LORD R. CECIL seconded the Amendment, which he hoped the Government would see their way to adopt. He would point out to the Prime Minister that the effect of the Resolution as it stood might be that the proposals to allot the time for the Report stage might come on at midnight or at one o'clock in the morning, because it would come on after the final decision in Committee. They were all agreed earlier in the afternoon that nothing could be gained and that nothing could be worse for the calm consideration of a proposal than that they should be up all night. He suggested that if the Amendment were accepted it would only have the effect of taking two hours of the Government's time on a subsequent day, and that the Government could put down some other business to occupy the rest of the sitting. It was very unusual, and he thought improper, to take the Report stage the day after Committee was finished. The proposal was a very reasonable one, and he hoped the right hon Gentleman would accept it.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 22, to leave out the words 'then proceed to,' and insert the words 'on a subsequent day.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. ASQUITH said he thought the apprehensions of the noble Lord were somewhat alarmist and unnecessary. As a matter of fact, the last day in Committee would be devoted to the consideration of the schedules, an exceedingly unexciting topic. (Opposition cries of "No.") The last schedule, at least, only repealed sections of other Acts of Parliament, and he would hope that the House would be in a thoroughly calm and sane condition of mind under the influence of that sort of discussion. He did not, however, wish to press matters of this kind against the general convenience of the House, and as there was some point in the noble Lord's remarks that they might be kept up late, he would agree to take two hours on a subsequent day intervening between the conclusion of the Committee stage and the Report.

Question, "That the words 'then proceed to' stand part of the Question," put, and negatived.

Proposed words there inserted.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) moved to leave out the words "moved by the Government." The point which he wished to raise arose in the discussions on the Old-Age Pensions Bill. On that Bill Amendments were not only not reached for discussion, but divisions were not allowed to be taken on them—however important those Amendments might be. There were two cases on which he thought it was very desirable that a division should have been but was not taken—the question whether the age should be sixty-five instead of seventy, and the question whether the Pensions Bill should apply to aliens who had become naturalised. The Prime Minister had said that there were a thousand Amendments to the Licensing Bill, but the great bulk of these would be ruled out of order, and he thought it would be a great hardship if none but Government Amendments could be divided upon. He begged to move.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) seconded.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 49, to leave out the words 'moved by the Government.'"—(*Mr. Fell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. ASQUITH said that, of course, he could not possibly accept the Amendment. It would limit the guillotine Resolution needlessly and would only lead to wearisome and fruitless divisions. The Government must be assumed to know on which Amendments it was absolutely necessary to take a division.

Amendment negatived.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said that as the Prime Minister had graciously accepted his Amendment he moved his next Amendment in order to give effect to it: "To leave out from the second 'be" in line 54, to end of line 58."

Amendment proposed—

"In line 54, to leave out from the second 'be,' to end of line 58.'"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy.*)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Resolution," put, and negatived.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) rose to move a new Amendment, when

MR. ASQUITH rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh" and "Shame."]

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 209; Noes, 88. (Division List No. 200.)

AYES.

Abraham,William(Cork, N. E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.SirW.Brampton
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Grady, J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Verney, F. W.

Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V.(Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence(Kent,Ashf'rd
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Joynson-Hicks, William
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Col.Charles W.(Evesham)
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin, S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nolan, Joseph
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,SirBerkeleyGeorge D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A.Stanley (York, E. R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

Main Question, as amended, put accordingly.

The House divided—Ayes, 209; Noes, 89. (Division List No. 201.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, RedmondJ.(Tyrone,N.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)

Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hart-Davies, T.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Sir Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Grady, J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Verney, F. W.
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt. Hn Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Joynson-Hicks, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Mildmay, Francis Bingham

Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nolan, Joseph
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike(Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

Ordered, that the Committee Stage, Report Stage, and Third Reading of the Licensing Bill, and the necessary stages of the Financial Resolution relating thereto, shall be proceeded with as follows :—

1. Committee Stage.

Nineteen allotted days shall be given to the Committee Stage of the Bill, and the proceedings in Committee on each allotted day shall be those shown in the second column of the table annexed to this Order, and those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the time shown in the third column of that table.

2. Report Stage.

Five allotted days shall be given to the Report stage of the Bill, and the proceedings for each of those allotted days shall be such as may be hereafter determined in manner provided by this Order, and those proceedings, if not previously brought to a conclusion, shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on each such allotted day.

3. Third Reading.

One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings thereof shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day.

On the conclusion of the Committee stage the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put, and the House shall on a subsequent day consider the proposals made by the Government for the allocation of the proceedings on the Report stage of the Bill between the allotted days given to that stage. The proceedings on the consideration of those proposals may be entered on at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House, but if they are not brought to a conclusion before the expiration of two hours after they have been commenced, the Speaker shall, at the expiration of that time, bring them to a conclusion by putting the Question on the Motion proposed by the Government, after having put the Question, if necessary, on any Amendment or other Motion which has been already proposed from the Chair and not disposed of.

After this Order comes into operation, any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution relating thereto is put down as the first Order of the Day, followed by the Bill. Provided that 5 p.m. shall be substituted for 10.30 p.m. as the time at which proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under the foregoing provisions on any allotted day which is a Friday, but Friday shall not be considered an allotted day for the purpose of the sixth or seventh allotted days.

For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments, new clauses, or schedules moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, clauses, or schedules, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of the Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill as the case may be.

A Motion may be made by the Government to leave out any clause or consecutive clauses of the Bill before the consideration of any Amendments to the clause or clauses in Committee.

The Question on a Motion made by the Government to leave out any clause or clauses of the Bill shall be put forthwith by the Chairman or Speaker without debate.

Any private business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day, as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking private business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any private business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by the Government, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate.

Nothing in this Order shall—(a) prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (b) prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of.

Table.

Committee Stage.

Allotted Day.	Proceedings.	Time for Proceedings to be brought to a Conclusion.
First	Clause 1	—
Second	Clause 1	10.30
Third	Clause 2	10.30
Fourth	Clause 3 to the beginning of subsection (2)	—
Fifth	Clause 3 to the beginning of subsection (2)	10.30
Sixth	Clause 3, subsection (2) Clauses 4 and 5	7.30 —
Seventh	Clauses 4 and 5 Clauses 6, 7, and 8	7.30 10.30
Eighth	Clause 9	10.30
Ninth	Clauses 10 and 11	—
Tenth	Clauses 10 and 11	10.30
Eleventh	Clauses 12, 13, and Committee stage of Financial Resolution	10.30
Twelfth	Report stage of Financial Resolution, and Clauses 14 to 17	10.30
Thirteenth	Clauses 18 and 19	10.30
Fourteenth	Clause 20	10.30
Fifteenth	Clauses 21 to 35	10.30
Sixteenth	Clause 36	10.30
Seventeenth	Clauses 37 to 40	10.30
Eighteenth	Clauses 41 to 47, and new Clauses	10.30
Ninteenth	Schedules, and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee stage to a conclusion	10.30

REGISTRATION BILL [LORDS].

Considered in Committee.

In the Committee.

[MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

SIR E. CARSON (Dublin University) who was almost inaudible in the Gallery was understood to ask a question as to the meaning of a certain phrase in the clause.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) said the words were a repetition of the words of the existing Act and had no purpose whatever in this Bill except with regard to the change of dates. They only treated with the principal Act, but as a change was being made in the dates, it was necessary that they should be put in.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) asked the hon. and learned Member to read the section of the Act to which he referred. These words were apparently meaningless. He presumed the claimant might state his case whether the appellant signed it or not. The principal Act was quite superfluous; was it necessary, therefore, to repeat the superfluity? This was surely a happy opportunity of getting rid of it. They might for once simplify legislation, and the Attorney-General could employ his Saturday afternoon in doing it.

SIR E. CARSON (Dublin University) said he thought the Bill was very curiously drawn: "If he approves the same, he shall sign the same as directed by the said section," but what did the "said section" refer to?

SIR W. ROBSON said the right hon. Gentleman seemed to assume that it was the duty of the law officer to carry in his head every section of every Act, and every part of it. This was not a general amendment of the registration law; he could not imagine any time less favourable for a general amendment of the law. The purposes of the Bill was to amend the registration law in respect solely and simply to certain proceedings in connection with appeals. In the old days the Long Vacation ended on 24th October, and the Michaelmas Sittings began, and the dates fixed by the Statute with regard to registration appeals were all fixed with reference to the first day of the Michaelmas Sittings. It was directed that the Revision Courts should sit between the 8th September and the 12th October; it was also directed that if any appeal were made, the Revising Barrister should draw up a statement of facts within ten days from the conclusion of the revision and within four days before the first day of the Michaelmas Term, so that if they had a revision concluding on the 12th October the Barrister would get at least eight days. The appellant, if he desired to go on with his appeal, would have to give notice within four days, and then it was directed that the Court should sit after the fourth day. Every one of those dates had become inappropriate by the change of the date in which the Michaelmas sittings now began. They now began on 12th October instead of on 24th October, and therefore the Revising Barrister could not comply with the law which directed him within four days before the beginning of the Michaelmas term to let his statement of facts be in the hands of the appellant. The object of the Bill was simply to enable the Revising Barrister to get his statement in, the appellant to give his four days notice; and to postpone the sitting of the Court until the 26th October. It was not at all the intention of the Bill to deal with the amendment of the registration law in any other particular than those which concerned these dates.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith) asked whether the Attorney-General could not alter the law in one single paragraph so as to deal with the case where a Revising Barrister submitted a statement of facts with which the appellant did not agree, but upon which he was forced to base his appeal. If they were carrying through a small amendment of the law the Attorney-General might have put in a short clause by which that particular hardship might be done away with.

SIR W. ROBSON said this Bill did not concern the case of "Kent *v.* Fittall," which had to do with the general registration law.

SIR WILLIAM BULL asked why the Bill was brought forward.

SIR W. ROBSON said it was simply and solely to alter the dates in order to meet the change in the termination of the Long Vacation.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he was not so unreasonable as the Attorney-General thought. He did not expect him to carry every clause of every statute in his head, but he expected of him what was commonly expected of Ministers, viz., that they should be in possession of sufficient information to explain the Bill of which they were momentarily in charge. The hon. and learned Gentleman said he would have been better equipped if he had had notice of the question, but some of them on that side would also have been better equipped if they had known that the Government intended to proceed late on a Friday afternoon with this Bill. Having said so much, he only wanted to ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to look at the words to which his right hon. and learned friend had called attention—the words "the said section." That was really language imported from another statute, but was it the appropriate language here? It must refer to some section mentioned in the Bill, but no such section was mentioned. They had to look at the Act to which this Bill referred, and then at another Act to which that Act referred, and then he believed they would have some kind of an idea of what the promoters of the Bill intended to convey. The words "the said section" meant nothing at all in this Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. and learned Gentleman was quite correct when he said that he attempted to explain this Bill on the previous day, when there was rather a disposition on the part of the House to take his explanation, and not to proceed with the consideration of the Bill. He must point out, however, that they had had a very hard week, and it was late, and they were extremely tired. The hon. and learned Gentleman had told them that the Bill was merely brought in in order to make an alteration in the date for appeals, and that being so they made no objection and allowed the Bill to go through. It was certainly not anticipated that the Committee stage would be taken that afternoon, and, as it was a legal Bill requiring careful consideration, he suggested that further proceedings on it should be adjourned till Monday. It was another instance of the great mistake made by hon. Gentlemen opposite with the idea that they would benefit legislation by forcing these things through. It was very advisable that they should know what they were doing, especially in regard to registration. He moved that they should report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion made, and Question, "That I report progress and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

COMPANIES BILL [LORDS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

MR. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston) thought that they all knew that companies instead of being formed in this country—companies of rather a doubtful character in some instances—were formed in British possessions, and he was not quite sure that such companies should have the power to hold land in this country. He thought that the Law Officers of the Crown or the President of the Board of Trade should give some assurance that precautions would be taken in the Bill that bogus companies would not be allowed to hold land in this country. This matter had come upon them at very short notice and when they had not had time to give it full consideration. He only asked for an explanation from those responsible for the Bill.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said he did not wish to oppose the Committee stage of the Bill, but unless reason could be shown that hardship had ensued to Colonial companies in the past by their not being able to hold land in this country under the old Act, he thought that this clause should not be passed without some explanation. It was quite right that facilities should be put in the way of properly formed companies to hold land here, but there was no doubt that bogus companies had been formed, and that it was necessary that precautions should be taken against them. He did not think that even under the old Act any great hardship was done, and he hoped that either the hon. and learned Gentleman or the President of the Board of Trade would give them some explanation. He did not see the latter present, and in the circumstances he begged to move to report progress.

Motion made, and Question, "That I report progress and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Tuesday next.

Whereupon MR. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 20th July, 1908.

The Right Honourable George Whiteley, having been created Baron Marchamley of Hawkestone in the county of Salop, was (in the usual manner), introduced.

The Earl Ferrers took the oath.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Tyne Improvement Bill. The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill. Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill. Moved, That the order made on the 25th of March last, "That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next," be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2^a; agreed to; Bills read 2^a accordingly.

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill. Read 3^a, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Dover Graving Docks Bill. Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments: The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments.

Leeds Corporation Bill. Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill. Committed for To-morrow.

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill; London United Tramways Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradfield Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill. Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at half-past One o'clock; read, and ordered to lie upon the Table.

London United Tramways Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill (Bradfield Rural Order); Holderness Water Bill. Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Earl of Powis and the Lord Langford be proposed to the House as Members of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Lord Dunboyne and the Lord Hindlip; read, and agreed to.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, &c.) Bill [H.L.]. Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read To-morrow.

Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill. Read 3^a (according to order), and passed.

Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PETITION.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I beg to present a petition signed by, I am informed, two thousand bankers and

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member merchants, chairmen of railway companies and insurance companies, and a large number of members of Lloyd's; and the prayer is that, in view of the statement of facts which they make, your honourable House should postpone the consideration of the Old-Age Pensions Bill until such time as the Report of the Commission on the Poor Law has been issued, and until an opportunity has been given to Parliament to consider the said Bill in the light of that Report. They add that, by refusing to proceed beyond the Second Reading of the Bill until such Report has been received, your Lordships will give proof that you are determined not to acquiesce in legislative measures which are not based on the fullest information and the best advice obtainable.

Petition presented and ordered to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRELAND (CONSTABULARY IN PROCLAIMED COUNTIES).

Return showing in the case of each proclaimed county in Ireland: The number of officers and men of the Royal Irish Constabulary actually in each county at the end of March, 1905; the number of men and officers wholly chargeable out of the Consolidated Fund for each county; the number of officers and men extra of the establishment in each county and their expenses for each half-year from the end of March, 1905, to the end of March, 1908; the sums demanded in these counties for the expense of conveying prisoners in each half-year from the end of March, 1905, to the end of March, 1908; the amount of compensation for malicious injuries granted in these counties in each half-year from March, 1905, to March, 1908.

Ordered to be laid before the House.—(*The Lord Killanin.*)

AGRICULTURAL (EDUCATION).

Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of agricultural education in England and Wales, with the minutes appointing the Committee and appendices; Minutes of evidence and index.

Lord Avebury.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.

No. 565. (The Surveys of British Africa, Ceylon, and the Federated Malay States)—Annual Report of the Colonial Survey Committee. Third year, to June, 1908.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL, 1908.

Revised draft of the articles of a charter for the University to have its seat, (i.) in Dublin; (ii.) in Belfast; revised draft of the articles of a charter for the college to have its seat in Dublin; revised draft of the articles of a new charter for the constituent college at (i.) Cork; (ii.) Galway.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 4052. Uruguay (Trade and Finance).

No. 4053. Germany (Consular District of Dusseldorf (Westphalia and Rhenish Provinces)).

No. 4054. China (Pakhoi).

No. 4055. Turkey (Vilayets of Aleppo and Adana).

No. 4056. Austria-Hungary (Foreign Trade).

No. 4057. France (Havre).

No. 4058. Argentine Republic (Buenos Ayres).

No. 4059. China (Wuchow).

IRISH RAILWAYS (VICEREGAL COMMISSION).

Fourth Report of the Commissioners; Appendix.

RAILWAY EMPLOYMENT SAFETY APPLIANCES.

Third and Fourth Reports of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to examine and, where necessary, to test appliances designed to diminish danger to men employed in railway service (in continuation of [Cd. 3638]).

ARMY.

Return for the year ended the 31st March, 1908, of pensions specially granted under Article 718, 1089, and 1124 of the Pay Warrant.

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND CORPORATION.

Fourth Report of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, for the year 1907.

CARE AND CONTROL OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Report of Commissioners appointed to inquire concerning the care and control of feeble-minded; minutes of evidence and appendices, Volumes I. to VII.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

Fifty-second Report of His Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners; with appendices.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Rules made by the Board of Trade.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904 (COUNTY BOROUGH OF NEWPORT).

Order made by the council of the county borough of Newport, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the county borough.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie upon the Table.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Denman.*) (No. 158.)

REDUCTIONS IN THE REGULAR ARMY.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I beg to ask the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies a Question of which I have given him private notice, and which I understand it will be convenient to him to answer to-day—namely, whether His Majesty's Government adhere to the declaration recently made by the Secretary of State for War in the House of Commons that no further reductions of the Regular Army are in contemplation.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I am obliged to the noble Viscount for having given me private notice of his intention to ask this Question. The statement made by my right hon. friend in another place to which I imagine the noble Viscount alludes, was as follows. A Question was put to my right hon. friend in the following terms—

> "I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is proposed to make any further reduction in the establishment or strength of the Infantry of the Line, and, if so, whether it is proposed that such reduction shall be effected by destroying additional units or by reducing the number of officers and men in existing units";

to which my right hon. friend replied—

> "No, Sir."

My reply to the noble Viscount is in the affirmative, but at the same time the circumstances under which the Question is asked I think make it desirable that I should say a few words in explanation. The noble Viscount's Question is in itself a somewhat unusual one, because it has relation to the Army Estimates for the year 1909, and is asked on 20th July of this year. I conceive that his reason for asking it is the existence of certain rumours and talk which have to some extent reached the newspapers, and which have been prevalent of late. Now political small talk and what Lord Beaconsfield called coffee house babble, are very apt to concentrate on one office at a particular time. The noble Viscount himself has had some experience of that. At one time it may be the India Office. At another time it may be the Admiralty. At this moment it happens to be the War Office. Sometimes there is foundation for talk of that kind; sometimes there is not much foundation. I think it would be desirable in the public interest that I should state to-day what actually has happened in this case. What has been going on has simply been an ordinary inquiry into general expenditure, not confined to one Department, such as all Governments are bound to make from time to time. There is an especial reason why, in view of the autumn session, which, as noble Lords have so often said, with our agreement, makes concentration on anything except the session itself difficult in the autumn months, an inquiry of that kind should begin this year earlier than usual. That is all that has occurred. Therefore I am not able to say anything further on the subject. But I would like to add, in conclusion, that we are as alive as noble Lords opposite to the needs of the defence of the country, and I think that it will be found that we have devoted quite as much attention to that subject as, if not more than, any Government which has existed before our time. It is perfectly true that we are bound in the matter of the spending services to study economy as far as we can; but we certainly do not intend to sacrifice efficiency for that economy.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Viscount WOLVERHAMPTON): My Lords, the measure which I have to ask your Lordships to read a second time to-day has undergone, both in its principle and in the machinery of its administration, greater and more exhaustive inquiry than almost any measure which for many years past has been brought up to your Lordships' House. It is a subject which has occupied the attention of Governments of various shades of politics—Governments which have represented at one time one section of the community, and at another time a totally different section; and it has a history of its own with which I shall not trouble your Lordships at any length, but I think it is worth while to recall to your memories what has been done, what inquiries have been made, and what steps have been taken before this measure passed its final stage in the House of Commons.

It is rather singular that so far back as the year 1772 a measure passed the House of Commons for a voluntary scheme of annuities for workmen, to be guaranteed and assisted out of the poor rates. That measure passed the House of Commons, but did not pass the House of Lords. There were various schemes for old-age relief from private individuals, notably from Canon Blackley, who, as your Lordships will remember, was a distinguished clergyman of the Church of England who took great interest in the whole question of Poor Law relief. In 1891 there was an informal Parliamentary Committee to consider the whole question. That Committee consisted of between sixty and seventy Members of both Houses, and it was presided over by that distinguished statesman whose removal from public life (we hope only for a temporary period), I think is regretted alike by his opponents as well as by his political friends. Mr. Chamberlain occupied the chair of that Committee, and no doubt was a very important leader in the opinions at which they arrived. I think it is true to say that of all the living statesmen who have taken a great interest in this question of old-age pensions the man who stands out most distinctly as having popularised the question is Mr. Chamberlain.

That Committee, of course, had no Parliamentary authority; it discussed the variety of schemes which were eventually submitted, but shortly after that Committee concluded its sittings Parliament was dissolved and a new Government came into power. It was my duty and my privilege, as President of the Local Government Board in that Government, to advise the Crown to issue a Royal Commission to investigate the whole question of relieving the aged poor, and also indirectly of dealing with the Poor Law. In 1893 that Commission was appointed, and in 1895 it presented its Report. It was a Commission constituted of singularly able and distinguished men. His present Majesty was a very active member of that Commission, and several well-known and distinguished politicians took a prominent part in it, aided and assisted by Members of Parliament who had an intimate personal acquaintance with the conditions and necessities of the poor. But it was not unanimous. There was a Minority Report. In fact, the differences of opinion which appeared in the whole history of that Commission showed that practically they were not in a position to recommend any scheme which had any chance of acceptance. In 1896 a Committee was appointed by the Treasury, presided over by Lord Rothschild, to look into the question from the financial point of view, and their inquiry was rather wide. It was for—

> "encouraging our industrial population by State or other aid to make provision for old age";

I believe that upwards of 100 separate schemes were submitted for the consideration of that Committee, which I think may at once prepare your Lordships to agree with me in the opinion that there cannot be anything fresh now to be said on that question. That was a complete and exhaustive inquiry into the whole position of Poor Law pensions. The Committee did not make a unanimous Report. In the year 1899 a Committee was appointed, over which Mr. Chaplin presided, and which made a thorough and exhaustive inquiry into the whole question. No doubt there has been a greater concentration of agreement upon the scheme which Mr. Chaplin's Committee proposed than perhaps upon any other scheme down to the present time. At all events, the then Government thought so highly of that scheme that they appointed a Finance Committee from the Treasury, under the presidency of Sir Edward Hamilton, to investigate its financial side. The result of that investigation was that the finance was found to be uncertain, and, I think I am justified in saying, unsound. In 1903 the last Bill was introduced and referred to a Select Committee, which also dealt with the principle of the measure and with its machinery.

Now we come to the present day. In March, 1906, which your Lordships will remember was within two months of the last general election, the House of Commons unanimously agreed to this Resolution—

> "That a measure is urgently needed in order that out of funds provided by taxation provision can be made for the payment of a pension to all the aged subjects of His Majesty in the United Kingdom."

The Government assented to that Resolution, but it must not be forgotten that the present Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, intimated that it was a very wide question so far as its detail was concerned, and that, while he accepted the principle, be reserved to himself and to his colleagues the fullest freedom of action with reference to the mode and the extent of any legislation which should follow the passing of that Resolution. It has been stated, in that mode of gossip or guessing to which my noble friend behind me just now alluded, that the Government took very little further interest in the matter, and that they only, so to speak, hurriedly and without due consideration prepared a measure which they threw upon the Table of the House of Commons, and which had not had the consideration to which such an important change in the law as they suggested was entitled.

To that statement I venture to give the strongest contradiction of which the English language is capable. I know something of the matter upon which I am speaking, and I say that for more than twelve months prior to the date on which I am speaking now the most anxious attention of the whole Cabinet, aided, of course, as it was in its detailed inquiries by a Committee, was devoted to the consideration of this question. The Government were aided by the various Departments specially interested—the Local Government Board, the Home Office, the Treasury, and the Post Office. I think noble Lords who have been in previous Governments will not contradict me when I say that the permanent Civil servants at the disposal of the various heads of those Departments are men of the highest standing and the greatest experience and are the soundest advisers which the Government could possess. We had the advantage of that assistance, and we ventured to submit to the House of Commons the measure which I will detail to your Lordships in a minute or two.

There is another peculiarity about this Bill—not only the exhaustive dissection to which it was subjected by the various instruments which I have mentioned, but the fact that, whether it be a good Bill or a bad Bill, it comes to your Lordships' House with this strong recommendation, that the Second Reading was agreed to in the House of Commons with only twenty-five dissentients; and, after it had undergone what was a very keen testing during the Committee stage, when the Third Reading was proposed there were only ten Members of the other House who voted against. If you bear in mind the facts I have cited—the Resolution which the House of Commons unanimously passed within two months of the general election, the smallness of the number of those who differ conscientiously from the whole scheme, coupled with the fact that not even the organised official Opposition voted against either the Second or the Third Reading—then if these facts are to be disregarded there really must be an end to talking of public opinion as represented in this country being recognised in this House.

I now pass to the Bill itself. I will deal with these matters as shortly as I can, but I must go somewhat into detail in order that the Bill, which is a complicated one and not very clear, perhaps, in some of its phraseology, may be more fully considered. First let me state who are to be entitled to those old-age pensions. I will deal with the numbers when I come to a subsequent part of my remarks. The class who are to be entitled to pensions, if this Bill passes into law, are persons of seventy years of age and upwards. They are to be British subjects resident in the United Kingdom for twenty years previously, which, of course, practically makes the provision for British subjects in every sense of the word. The amount of the pension they are to receive is subject to the amount of their private income, about which there has been great controversy. There have been those who have maintained that everybody should be entitled to the pension, and those who have maintained, and maintained successfully, the theory that the proper and fair mode of adjusting the relationships which ought to exist between the pension and the private means of those who are to receive it should be on the principle of a sliding scale.

Where the private income in any shape or form amounts to £21, then the pension is to be 5s. a week; if it amounts to £23 12s. 6d., the pension is to be 4s. a week; if it amounts to £26 5s., the pension is to be 3s. a week; if it amounts to £28 17s. 6d., the pension is to be 2s. a week, and if the private income is £31 10s., the pension is to be 1s. a week. Above £31 10s. there is to be no pension paid at all. Of course that is on the principle of levelling down the pension in proportion to the levelling up of the private means. The maximum pension, as I have said, is 5s. a week and that sum has the sanction of high authorities in the various inquiries to which I have referred.

There are certain disqualifications. The first disqualification is the receiving of Poor Law relief since 1st January, 1908. Your Lordships will see that the reason for limiting this to a certain period is that if this disqualification were not introduced there would be a large transfer immediately from outdoor relief and possibly indoor relief on to the pensions, and it would throw a very heavy charge upon the Pension Fund. The next disqualification—one on which, perhaps, your Lordships will entertain some strong opinions, and with regard to which you will perhaps not be satisfied with the exact wording which the House of Commons has, after much discussion, agreed to—is one directed against the man who—

> "Has habitually failed to work according to his ability, opportunity, and need for the maintenance or benefit of himself and those legally dependent upon him."

The object of that is to exclude the wastrels—the gentlemen who live on writing begging letters, and the class who have not done an honest day's work in their lives and never intend to. I think there would be, generally, a very strong feeling against that class being pensioned off by the State; and whether those words are sufficient, or whether they are too wide, is a question for further consideration; it in no way affects the principle of the measure or its machinery. I think this House will be agreed that there should be no encouragement of the wastrel and the idle man in regard to this pension.

Then there is the provision, introduced after a good deal of discussion, that—

> "A person shall not be disqualified if he has continuously for ten years up to attaining the age of sixty, by means of payments to friendly, provident, or other societies, or trade unions, or other approved steps, made such provision against old age, sickness, infirmity, or want or loss of employment as may be recognised as proper provision for the purpose by regulations under this Act."

In that case a man will not be disqualified by the test that he must have been an industrious man. If he has done that—I admit it is a difficult inquiry to carry on—he has given practical proof that he is a thrifty man and has desired to do according to the best of his ability for his family. There is another disqualification—

> "While he is detained in any asylum within the meaning of the Lunacy Act, 1890, or while he is being maintained in any place as a pauper or criminal lunatic."

And, further—

> "Where a person has been, before the passing of this Act, or is after the passing of this Act, convicted of any offence, and ordered to be imprisoned without the option of a fine or to suffer any greater punishment, he shall be disqualified for receiving or continuing to receive an old-age pension under this Act, while he is detained in prison in consequence of the order and for a further period of ten years after the date on which he is released from prison."

There are other provisions in regard to administration, with which I need not trouble your Lordships.

These pensions are to be inalienable. There is to be no power to charge them or to attempt to borrow money upon them. Any attempt to alienate the pension kills the pension. The machinery by which the Bill is to be carried into effect is as follows. The Treasury are to appoint pension officers and also to fix the areas in which they will work. An arrangement has been come to between the Treasury and the Post Office by which Inland Revenue officers will be able to do this pension work without adding very greatly to the cost of administration. I need hardly say that inasmuch as the Treasury is to find the money the Treasury must be able to have a very effective control over the expenditure. The pension officer is the representative of the Treasury. The next stage in the administration is what is called the local pension committee, and upon that committee will practically depend the working of this Act and its administration. In boroughs or urban districts, where the borough or urban district has a population of 20,000, their councils, municipal or district, as the case may be, will have the appointment of a pension committee; but there is a provision in the Bill that they must not necessarily be members of the municipal or urban authority which is appointing them. That is to enable the local body to choose competent men, whether they are or are not members of those municipal authorities. In the areas outside these authorities the county councils are to appoint the pension committees.

All claims for pensions, all questions of disqualification, and a great many other questions which must necessarily arise in the administration are to be defined by regulations; and in all these matters the Pension Committee are to be the final authority, subject to an appeal to the central pension authority, which will be the Local Government Board. Therefore the three stages of the hierarchy are the pension officer, the local pension committee, and the Local Government Board, and I feel perfectly satisfied that with these checks and that administration, there will be a general desire—and I think the desire will be carried out both with justice and with care—to make this Act a complete and satisfactory success. Then there is a provision with reference to false statements. The making of false statements will kill the pension, and the matter is dealt with accordingly. The pensions are to be paid through the Post Office and are to commence on the first Friday after the claim is allowed, and all pensions will be paid weekly. Your Lordships will gather from what I have said that Parliament, and Parliament alone, is to find the money for this expenditure.

I shall next be asked how many pensioners we expect to have. That has been a question which has been subjected to every sort of test by many qualified statisticians, and the Government have come to the conclusion that at the present time and dealing with the present state of the population they are safe in assuming that there will be somewhere between 500,000 and 550,000 persons duly qualified. The cost of the pensions to that extent for the next year is put down at about £1,250,000. The charge on the current financial year which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already provided for, and which will be voted in Committee of Supply in the course of the present week in a Supplementary Estimate, is £1,250,000 and that will defray the expenses of the scheme up to the end of the financial year. What will be required during the next financial year it is, of course, impossible to say, and therefore it would be absurd for anyone to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer where he expects to get it from. We cannot embark upon, and we shall not embark upon the Budget of 1909 in the summer of 1908. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a remark the other day which I thought was very correct. He said that it really was ridiculous to suppose that any body of Britishers would make proposals to Parliament to carry out a great scheme without knowing pretty clearly where the funds were to come from out of which the cost of that scheme was to be defrayed.

Two great points have been raised in this controversy as to whether it would not be wiser that these schemes should be universal and that they should partake of a contributory character. I note your Lordships cheer that. It is a very singular thing that everybody of authority who has gone into this question, from Mr. Chamberlain downwards, have all been fascinated with the idea of contribution, but when they have attempted to apply it and see how it is to work one by one the advocates of contribution have been obliged to admit that the thing is unjust and, therefore, impossible. If your Lordships will allow me, I should like to read two or three words from Mr. Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons on this subject. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "My own belief is that the only way to solve this question of old-age pensions is by approaching it by sections, and that we shall never be able to deal with it as a whole. I think it is a mistake to confine assistance entirely to those who have themselves directly contributed to the pensions, because there are indirect methods and tests of thrift and providence which are just as good as direct contributions. The man who has brought up a family without having recourse to Poor Law relief, the man who has invested a little money in a house, is not necessarily less deserving of sympathy and assistance than the man who has contributed so much a year in order to provide a pension at sixty-five. I think it is agreed that we must put aside at once any further attempt to secure compulsory contributions from the working classes. That is a Continental system, but I do not think it has been such a success in Germany that a scheme of that kind can possibly be adopted here. I think it may also be laid down that the working classes are at present either unable or unwilling to purchase deferred annuities by payments over a long period of years. The one fatal objection to such a scheme is this: that if the benefit to be received at sixty-five is to depend upon the continuance of the payments, a very large proportion of the persons who subscribe will, by some temporary misfortune, some inability to provide the payments, be thrown out of the benefits; for a failure to pay a single payment may deprive a man, not only of the pension, but also of the contributions he has already made."

Mr. Booth has said that of the people who come on the Poor Law at sixty-five, five-sixths have never applied for relief up to the age of sixty. It would be unfair and unwise to attempt to extract anything more from the wages of a man who had maintained himself up to sixty. Mr. Burt said the other day in the House of Commons that there were 1,750,000 male workers in this country who were not earning more than 20s. a week. That is not Mr. Burt's own statement; it is on the authority of Sir Robert Giffen. When we remember their rents, cost of food and clothing, and, in a very large number of cases, their contributions to friendly, provident, and building societies, the bulk of the working population have not much margin left for any further saving.

There are two Amendments down for discussion this evening. The first, in the name of Lord Wemyss, maintains that pending the Report of the Royal Commission now inquiring into the principles and working of the existing Poor Law it would be unwise to enter upon the consideration of the Bill. In the first instance, that is an attractive Amendment and it deserves to be fairly and fully considered. The great Poor Law Act of 1834 was one of the wisest Acts that Parliament ever passed, and it practically saved this country from insolvency. But in 1834 the poor of the country were, to a very great extent, confined to the agricultural section of the community. The great manufactories and industries which have mainly produced to an enormous degree the wealth of the country did not then exist. The country in which we live to-day is a totally different one. The class of people liable to come upon the Poor Law has enormously increased, the mode and cost of living have also increased, and we are saddled with a scheme of workhouses in which there is no classification. There is no distinction between old and young, between the thrifty and industrious and the criminal, and, while the feeling of the country has rightly improved the condition of the inhabitants of the poor-houses, it has not taken sufficient steps to relieve them from the associations of the workhouse and the companions by which they are surrounded. You ought not to put in one union the old and young, the aged and infirm, those who have led good honest lives, and those whose lives have been the contrary.

The inquiry is a very complicated one. I have every confidence in Lord George Hamilton, who, in addition to his many public services, has rendered another in presiding over the Commission, and I am convinced that its Report will be a great and statesmanlike proposal. But it cannot be presented much before the end of the year—the Government hope in the autumn—and it will require an amount of attention that will occupy a long time by the Government of the day, whoever they may be. To wait until this Report has been presented and considered would be to delay the real working of this scheme for four or five years. The Government are not prepared to assent to such a proposal. They see their way clear to dealing to a practical extent with this gigantic evil, and are determined to do so as soon as they possibly can.

The Amendment in the name of Lord Heneage, which states that there is no reliable information as to cost, deals with another question, and is not one that the Government could accept. What your Lordships have to consider is whether you will pass the Bill or throw it out. Of the people of the age of seventy and upwards the class deserving the greatest sympathy is that of the working woman. Her life is a very hard one. She occupies perhaps, a more influential and certainly a more exhausting sphere than her husband. She has no opportunity of saving for her old age, and the spectacle of a widow of that class with no prospect before her save the workhouse is not worthy of a wealthy country like ours. One half of the beneficiaries under the Bill will be women over 70 years of age, and the other half of the beneficiaries under the Bill will be men over seventy years of age who have done their duty. I do not think the indebtedness of this country to its working men, the enormous trust which is reposed in them, and the faithfulness with which it is discharged, are often realised. The whole machinery of progressive civilised life depends upon our working classes; to them is entrusted the working of our great factories, industries, and mines, from which from time to time come stories showing that among the workmen are heroes and martyrs of the truest type; and to the activity, good conduct, and skill of working men the whole of our railway organisation is confided. Working men are a great national asset of which the country ought to be proud, and I trust I shall not appeal in vain to your Lordships to pass a measure which will redound to the prosperity and glory of the country.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Viscount Wolverhampton.*)

*THE EARL OF WEMYSS, who had given notice of an Amendment—

> "That pending the Report of the Royal Commission now inquiring into the principles and working of the existing Poor Law it would be unwise to enter upon the consideration of a Bill establishing the far-reaching principle of State Old-Age Pensions"—

said: My Lords, I labour under the disadvantage of not having heard a word of the speech of the noble Viscount who moved the Second Reading of the Bill. Indeed, I wondered what he was talking about, because I was not aware that he, instead of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was to move the Second Reading of the Bill. But a friend behind me wrote on a piece of paper that the noble Viscount had said that the adoption of my Amendment would defer legislation on the subject for four or five years. I think it would be better to put off legislation for forty years rather than have bad legislation.

Last Thursday *The Times*, in a leading article, recommended your Lordships to pass the Second and even the Third Reading of the Bill, not on account of any merit it has, but for your own sake, and for the good of your Lordships' House. In the same article, however, there was a sentence which blew all this to smithereens, and I commend it to the notice of your Lordships' House. The sentence ran—

> "But the real objection to the Bill is that it is fundamentally on wrong lines, and is, in

> fact, not a pension but a Bill giving indefinite extension of outdoor relief."

It is on that ground that I venture to ask your Lordships whether it is wise to go on with the Bill. I want your Lordships to consider, supposing this to be right, what indefinite extension of outdoor relief means.

I should like to take your Lordships back seventy years. In 1834 the Poor Law, which had existed from the time of Elizabeth, had, by mismanagement and lax administration, produced such a state of things that it was given in evidence before the Poor Law Commission of that date that labourers said—

> "Damn work! Blast work! Why should I work when I can get 10s. from the rates for doing nothing."

The Commission, on which the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Carlisle sat, reported that all this was due to lax administration, and that stringency in administering the law was necessary. There may be people who say that the law has been too stringent and too harsh, but those two Bishops evidently did not think so. What has happened since then? From that time better administration has prevailed, outdoor relief has been restricted, and the independence of the people has been restored. If, from sentimental motives, Parliament passes this Bill, I hold that you will establish a system of demoralisation amongst the working classes, that you will do away with thrift, that families will cease to regard it as an obligation to maintain those of their members whose working days are passed, and that self-reliance will be diminished.

I see in his place my noble friend Lord Rosebery. He, as Chancellor of the University of Glasgow, delivered the other day a most admirable speech, in the course of which he spoke strongly of the need of self-reliance. What he said is so much to the point that I will, with your Lordships permission, read it. The noble Earl said—

> "The State invites us every day to lean upon it. I seem to hear the wheedling and alluring whisper, 'Sound you may be, we bid you be a cripple. Do you see? Be blind. Do you hear? Be deaf. Do you walk? Be not so venturesome. Here is a crutch for one arm, when you get accustomed to it, you will get accustomed to it, you will soon want another—the sooner the better.' The strongest man if encouraged may soon accustom himself to the methods of an invalid; he may train himself to totter, or to be fed with a spoon. . . . . Every day the area for initiative is being narrowed, every day the standing ground for self-reliance is being undermined; every day the public infringes—with the best intentions, no doubt—on the individual; the nation is being taken into custody by the State."

And at the end the noble Earl said—

> "It was self-reliance that built the Empire; it is by self-reliance, and all that that implies, that it must be welded and continued."

Those are wise words, which I humbly recommend to the attention of your Lordships.

Now I come to my Amendment. What does that Amendment say? Does it ask you not to deal with this question? Nothing of the kind. All that my Amendment says is that, pending the Report of the Royal Commission now inquiring into the principles and working of the existing poor law, it would be unwise to enter upon the consideration of a Bill establishing the far-reaching principle of State old-age pensions. Petitions have been presented against the Bill, but it is admitted that the Second Reading is to pass. I have always understood that everything in principle depends upon the Second Reading, and that when you adopt the Second Reading of a measure you have to go on with the line of that Bill; therefore, it is best to meet the thing *in limine*, and not to deal with it until you have the Report of the Commission. The Commission must soon report, and I have no doubt their Report will touch on the question of old-age pensions, and with that information before it Parliament will be in a much better position to deal with this subject than it is at the present time. That is the common sense view; it seems to me like political madness to act otherwise. That is all I ask. In no other relation of life would men act as Ministers are doing in regard to this Bill; they would wait for information before they acted, and by my Amendment I ask them to do so in this case.

I could, if I wished to detain your Lordships, give you unlimited quotations against this Bill. All those who have given their lives to the care of the poor and are interested in thrift and other societies are all hostile to the Bill, as it at present stands. I will not quote those authorities, but will be satisfied by reading to your Lordships an extract from a circular issued by the Charity Organisation Society, of which many of your Lordships are members, and which has done excellent work during the last thirty years. That society has issued a circular against the Bill in which they assert that—

> "Neither the Bill, nor anything like the Bill, has ever been demanded by, or received the sanction of, the electors. To delay the passing of the Bill can do no serious injury to the country and will enable the nation to consider calmly the policy of a measure which, for good or bad, produces a social revolution."

That is an accurate description of the Bill, and I think it would be wise if your Lordships were to postpone consideration of it until all possible information is obtained. For what are you doing? You will be tying a millstone round the neck of the country and involving it in an expenditure in the end of nearly £30,000,000 a year.

On the very day last week when this Bill passed through the other House there was in France a Commission of the Senate sitting considering a Pension Bill, and that Commission, in spite of the wish of the French Government that the Bill should proceed and that they should report upon it, declined to do so until all the information that could possibly be obtained was before them. My Lords, we are told, "*Fas est ab hoste doceri*," but I venture to suggest that your Lordships might also learn from a friend. I should like to see the *entente cordiale* of Shepherd's Bush carried to your Lordships' House; and that you should act as wisely, as moderately, and as reasonably as the French Commission are doing. Let me further remind your Lordships of that splendid French maxim "*Fais ce que doit advienne que pourra*," and urge your Lordships to act upon it. I have nothing more to add. I intend to stick to my guns and to divide your Lordships if I can get a teller, and I have secured one. What success we shall have in the division lobbies I do not know, but, at any rate, whatever the result may be, one thing is certain—that all the common-sense and the sense of what is right and reasonable in dealing with such a question as this will be found with the minority. I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

Amendment moved—

> "To leave out all the words after the word 'That,' in order to insert these words 'pending the Report of the Royal Commission now inquiring into the principles and working of the existing Poor Law it would be unwise to enter upon the consideration of a Bill establishing the far-reaching principle of State Old-Age Pensions.'"—(*The Earl of Wemyss.*)

*EARL CROMER: My Lords, I am sure the feeling which is uppermost in your Lordships' minds at this moment is one of pleasure that no advance of years in any way diminishes the force and eloquence of the noble Earl who has just addressed the House. I am aware that disclaimers of party spirit are often received with some degree of scepticism; yet the line of conduct I have persistently followed throughout the short period during which I have occasionally taken part in the debates in this House justifies me in expressing a hope that noble Lords opposite will believe me when I say that in criticising the measure now brought forward by His Majesty's Government, I am expresssing opinions which, whether they are right or wrong, are based solely on sincere and honest conviction.

What was the position of this question when the present Government came into power? The matter had, it is true, been for long under consideration. There was a universal desire that some better provision than exists at present should be made for the aged poor. But the immediate treatment of the question was not one of the somewhat numerous mandates which it has from time to time been stated were conferred on the Government at the last general election. The statement of the Prime Minister on this point is quite explicit. He said—

> "His Majesty's present Government came into power and went through the last general election entirely unpledged in regard to this matter."

The Government were, however, in a position which is fraught with much political danger. They thought that something must be done, and when politicians act on this principle, without having a clear idea of what should be done, they not infrequently end by doing a number of things which, as subsequent events prove, had much better have been left undone. The Government did not act at once. They very naturally required time to consider the question. Above all—I again quote the words of the Prime Minister—

> "What was most important was to lay a solid financial foundation for any future structure it might be possible to raise."

Nothing could be more commendable than the assertion of this very sound principle; but, my Lords, I look in vain for any solidity in the financial foundations of the structure laid by the Bill now before us. It appears to me that those foundations are eminently wanting in solidity and stability.

In the first place, no one can state with any degree of precision what the scheme will cost. The original estimate was £6,000,000; the estimate then crept up to £8,000,000. By the abandonment of the poor relief disqualification in 1910, the cost will, I believe, be raised by another two or three millions. Nor is this all. I do not generally attach much importance to what is known as the thin end of the wedge argument, but certainly, if ever that argument applied, it is in the present case. The pressure to extend the operation of the Act in a liberal direction will be irresistible. Let us be under no delusion as to the true facts of the case. This Bill practically mortgages all the future resources of the country for an indefinite time and renders an increase of burdensome taxation of one sort or another, not only probable, but almost certain. We are indeed told that the administration of the Poor Law will be reformed, and that there will be a large saving of local rates in respect to poor relief. But surely it would have been wiser to have awaited the Report of Lord George Hamilton's Commission, and to have reformed the Poor Law before bringing forward a scheme of such vast importance as that contained in the Bill now under consideration.

My Lords, we have already in this session of Parliament had one object-lesson which proves the unwisdom of putting the cart before the horse in matters of this sort. Consider what has happened in connection with Army reform. The scheme brought forward by the Secretary of State for War divided itself into two parts. There was the easy part, which consisted in reducing the Regular Army, and the more difficult part, which consisted in raising a new Territorial Army. Sound policy would, I think, have dictated the adjournment of the first part of the programme whilst the latter part was in an experimental stage, even although this process would have involved some temporary increase of expenditure. But this was not done. Destruction was allowed to come first. Construction came limping on painfully afterwards, with the result that, in spite of the ability, energy and perseverance displayed by the Secretary of State for War, which are universally recognised, the success of the somewhat hazardous experiment which is being tried is still doubtful. It would seem that the same process is to be repeated in another administrative field. It is one which certainly appears to me to be tainted with a very impolitic degree of rashness.

But, my Lords, if nothing certain can be predicted about the expenditure which lies before us, a still greater uncertainty hangs over the means for meeting that expenditure, which, under any showing, will certainly be large, for in this case we have to think, not only in millions, but more probably in tens of millions. The idea that any considerable sum can be provided by economies in other directions may be at once dismissed as impracticable, although some ominous rumours, which I was glad to hear contradicted by the noble Earl (Lord Crewe) have been afloat that still further reductions in the Army are contemplated. There then only remain therefore three possible expedients. One is to suspend the whole or a part of the Sinking Fund, a point as to which I shall have something further to say immediately. The second is to increase direct, and the third to increase indirect taxation. It is notorious that many of the followers of the present Government warmly favour the idea of resorting to a large increase of direct taxation. My Lords, I am not on the present occasion going to make a speech on the financial position in general. I wish, however, to point out that the disproportion which at one time existed between the revenue raised from direct and indirect taxes has been now wholly redressed. The question of the incidence of taxation has been very carefully examined by some of the most able economists and statisticians of the day, and I believe I am correct in saying that the existence of any great inequality in the incidence cannot be maintained in argument. In any case, if any inequality exists it is almost certainly to the advantage of the payer of indirect rather than of direct taxes. I am, moreover, sufficiently old-fashioned to deprecate these attempts to shift all the burden of taxation from one class of the community to the other. I greatly prefer the principle advocated by Mr. Gladstone, who likened direct and indirect taxation to two damsels equally attractive to the eye of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, neither of whom should be favoured at the expense of the other.

Look, however, at the matter in any way we like, it seems to me extremely doubtful whether, if this Bill passes into law, it will be found possible for long to balance the national revenue and expenditure by a resort to direct taxation only. There is a limit beyond which even the most extreme advocates of a graduated income-tax will be unable to go without killing the goose with the golden egg, and when that limit is reached, a resort to indirect taxation will be inevitable. Will the additional revenue required then be raised by increasing the taxes on beer and tobacco? I doubt it, in view of the great unpopularity which would accrue to any Government which resorted to these expedients. No, my Lords, the form which will, under the supposed circumstances, prove the path of least resistance, will, unless I am much mistaken, be that indicated by the tariff reformers. I alluded just now to the mandates which were conferred, or which have been at times supposed to have been conferred, on the present Government at the last general election. The main mandate was, I think, clear enough. It was to defend the free trade camp, but what sort of a defence is it when the general in command does not, indeed, surrender to the enemy, but deliberately makes so large a breach in the walls as to facilitate his entry? The way I interpret the mandate of the last general election is that not merely were the Government to adopt a free trade policy during the period—always uncertain and fleeting in democratic countries—that they would remain in office, but that they would do nothing to imperil the cause at any future time.

It is related that on the occasion of one of Frederic the Great's battles, when he saw his troops disinclined to advance against a hot fire, he shouted out to them:

> "Rascals, do you expect to live for ever?"

Omitting the somewhat uncomplimentary epithet of this plain-spoken monarch, I am tempted to ask this same question of the present Government. What do they expect will happen to the cause which they are pledged to defend when they resign their seals of office to others who are under no such pledges, and who have, indeed, given pledges of a very opposite description? My Lords, if the policy of free trade is doomed to die, future historians will, unless I am much mistaken, write something of this sort over its grave, "Here lies a noble policy, which gave prosperity to the country for 60 years; it was stabbed in the back by those who were by way of being its best friends."

But if the policy set forth in this Bill is viewed askance by free traders, neither do I see how it can commend itself to tariff reformers, whether of the moderate or extreme type. I conceive that the moderate tariff reformers, who, I trust, form the majority of the party, scout the absurd fallacy that a nation can be taxed into prosperity. They look on high taxation, whether of a direct or indirect type, as bad in itself, although possibly inevitable. They will not in this case, I conceive, say—

> "We rejoice in an enormous increase of expenditure, because it will oblige us to impose fresh indirect taxes."

Rather will they say—

> "We must provide for this increase of expenditure, and the least objectionable method of doing so is to adopt the policy of tariff reform."

They may be right or wrong in their methods, but the position is at all events perfectly logical and comprehensible. And how, my Lords, should the policy set forth in this Bill be regarded by the extreme tariff reformers, namely, those who are avowedly protectionists? Scarcely, I venture to think, with more favour than by the free traders and the moderate tariff reformers, for, in order to accomplish the objects of this Bill, additional revenue will be required, and the aim of the protectionist in imposing indirect taxes is not to increase the revenue, but to protect native industries. If the revenue is increased, it will show that, in spite of the new taxes, the foreigner has been able to jump over the tariff wall, and the protectionist will have failed to attain his object.

I know very well that in framing a Budget it is sometimes necessary to have faith in the future and to rely on rather doubtful estimates. But I can confidently assert that in the course of my experience —and I think that I have been more or less responsible for some couple of dozen or more State Budgets—I have never known a case of such reckless finance as that with which we now have to deal. I can apply no other term but reckless to a plan which involves an enormous increase of expenditure without any adequate provision being made for meeting liabilities when they fall due. I see sitting on the bench opposite, my noble friend Lord Welby. It would be interesting to know what he really thinks of this scheme. For many years the noble Lord was one of the most efficient and trusted guardians of the public purse. I think the noble Lord's economical, as also his economic soul must be wrung with anguish at the manner in which latter day authorities have discarded the practice and principles of the many illustrious and statesmanlike financiers under whom the noble Lord has served. I think that he must invoke the shades of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone, which still, perhaps, hover round the Treasury, and that he must congratulate himself that it will devolve on other permanent officials and not on himself to bring home to party politicians in a difficulty the homely principle that a nation, like an individual, has to cut its coat according to its cloth, and that if they do not do so they are liable to have the bailiffs upon them.

And now, my Lords, let me turn to another financial point of even greater importance than any of those to which I have so far alluded. What, I would ask, in the present condition of Europe is the main duty which devolves on the Government of this country? For my own part, I have no sort of hesitation in replying to this question. Their main duty is to make provision betimes for the European conflict which may not improbably be forced on us before many years have elapsed. I am aware that the mass of the people of this country, who do not follow foreign affairs with any very close attention, are not alive to the possibility of any such conflict taking place. I say it is the duty of a Government, gifted with both patriotism and foresight, who have means of information at their disposal which is not available to the general public, to provide betimes for that danger—a danger of which I, in common, I believe, with most people who can speak with real authority on foreign affairs, am very firmly convinced. I am now treading on delicate ground. It is neither necessary nor desirable that I should state at length my reasons for holding this opinion. I will only say that in order to justify it, it is quite unnecessary to impugn the good faith of those high authorities abroad who constantly reiterate their peaceful intentions. Neither is it necessary to hold that any deliberate intentions hostile to this country exist.

We are, however, living in times when the influence of individuals, however highly placed, is limited. When national interests are involved, and race passions are excited, there is always a risk, and more than a risk, that a collision between rival nations will take place, however pacific may be the intentions of their rulers. Let me add that if, as I believe will be the case, the enactment of this law imperils the cause of free trade, the chances of a collision will be materially increased. I have sometimes seen it stated in reference to this argument, that it would be unjust and unreasonable of foreign nations to take offence at us if we follow the example —as, I think, the bad example—that most of them have set. I fully agree, but I think that those who reason after this fashion can have had but little practical experience in the treatment of international questions. When once national interests point, or seem to point, in the direction of falling on a rival, it is quite within the resources of an adroit diplomacy to find some means for casting a veil of justice and reasonableness over the real cause. But, my Lords, is the fact that we may give offence any valid reason for discarding a policy of tariff reform? Not at all. I dislike that policy on other grounds, but I should be the first to maintain that if the Parliament and people of this country deliberately came to the conclusion that the policy should be adopted, they should most vehemently resent any foreign interference to prevent its adoption. But whilst affording no reason for discarding the policy, the fact that it may, and probably will, widen the breach between us and some foreign nations affords a very valid reason for being so strong that we can assert, if needs be by force of arms, our unquestionable right to manage our own affairs in our own way.

It is clear that if my diagnosis of the situation is correct, as I firmly believe it to be, the fact is of such vital importance as to cast all other subjects into insignificance. Our main duty, to my mind, is to husband our financial resources and to organise, not only our naval, but also our military forces in such a manner as to meet whatever the future may bring forth, and, in estimating the need of preparation, my Lords, it should be borne in mind that troubles may possibly not come alone. Can anyone assert that the condition either of India or Ireland is altogether satisfactory?

Tried by the test which I have applied, what does this Bill do? I say that it will cripple us to a dangerous extent under all the three heads, financial, military, and naval, in respect of which preparedness for national defence has to be considered. Finance is certainly the most important of the three, and, indeed, may be said to embrace the other two, for money provides the sinews for war. Look first at the case of the Sinking Fund. I, of course, fully admit that under ordinary circumstances the question of what portion of the revenue should be applied to the reduction of debt and what to a remission of taxation admits of discussion. It is quite possible to carry reduction of debt too far. But I submit that present circumstances are not ordinary. I hold that now that we are at peace we should, by reducing debt, endeavour to strengthen our financial position in order to be better able to bear the strain which may be imposed on us by war. I look, therefore, askance at the very clear hint which has been given to us that a raid on the Sinking Fund is contemplated, and I most earnestly hope that the inroads on that fund will not be carried too far.

Then, my Lords, I conceive that one of the first duties of a wise financier, especially if a very uncertain and perhaps somewhat gloomy future lies before him, is to provide for an adequate fiscal reserve to be used in time of national emergency. Now if, as I hold, the consequences of this measure will be to necessitate the imposition of fresh taxes, every hundred pounds which is imposed, whether in a direct or indirect form, will by so much weaken our ability to cope with the emergency when it arises. Notably, if the rather wild schemes for a graduated and highly oppressive income tax, which are at times discussed, are adopted, a deadly blow will be struck at the most important fiscal reserve we now possess. The efficiency of the reserve is already impaired by keeping the income-tax at its present high rate in time of peace. To increase that rate, save to meet a temporary emergency, would certainly appear to me to be an act of grave imprudence. Yet I observe that, a short time ago, in another place, the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke, apparently with approval, of the Japanese system which, he said, involved an income tax graduated up to as much as five shillings in the pound.

My Lords, the Bill admits of criticism on grounds other than those to which I have alluded. It may be argued with great force that all the evils which existed under the old Poor Law will be reintroduced, but I confine myself to the financial aspect of the case, both because I think that aspect is of predominating importance and because it is one to which I have devoted special attention. If the Bill becomes law we shall all await next spring with the greatest interest to know, in language which was, I think, used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on what hen-roost his burglarious hand will descend. The practical question, however, is what is to be done about this Bill now? At a later period of this debate your Lordships will, without doubt, hear the views entertained on this subject by the noble Marquess who is the Leader of the Opposition, and whom I may perhaps be permitted to say, in spite of the slight tariff reform rift within the lute, I consider my leader, and whom I shall certainly follow on the present occasion.

Speaking, however, as an individual Member of this House, I have no hesitation in stating what, in my humble opinion, would be the course most conducive to the true interests of the nation if the question would be considered exclusively on its own merits. It would be to decline to consider this momentous question until such time as the Poor Law Commission has reported, and until the Government had produced its scheme of poor law reform. I am, however, aware of the very weighty objections which may be urged against the adoption of this course. Hopes have been excited amongst a number of poor people, with whom, I venture to assert, your Lordships sympathise quite as much as those who have been the chief promoters of this measure. Moreover, the fact cannot be ignored that the main principles embodied in this Bill have been approved by both the great parties represented in the other House. We are bound to believe that the divisions which have taken place in that House truly represent the opinions of those who have been elected to represent the people of this country, yet it is perhaps permissible to make what casuists call a mental reserve on this subject. It would be interesting to place everyone who, whether in or outside Parliament, has expressed an opinion on this Bill in a political confessional, and invite him to state what lies in the inmost recesses of his heart. Under such a process some interesting confessions would, I make bold to say, be elicited, not only amongst the Members of the Opposition, but amongst the supporters of the present Government. It is not a very far-fetched conjecture to surmise that the predominating sentiment in the minds of many would be one of alarm at what they have done or contributed to do. However this may be, I am reluctantly obliged to admit that there are great objections to the adoption of the course which, as I have said, would, in my opinion, be most conducive to the highest interests of the nation.

My Lords, I will only conclude by saying that whatever may be the ultimate fate of this Bill, it will be some poor consolation to me, if it passes into law, that I have been able to raise a voice, however feeble, against a measure which I cannot but regard as rash in the highest degree, and opposed to those principles of sound finance on which the material prosperity of every civilised country should rest. When the burden of the fresh taxation which is inevitable begins to be felt, and when in times of national emergency all patriotic men cry out for these lost millions, let it be known, at all events, on whom rests the true responsibility for the creation of so sombre a situation, and for the introduction of the financial revolution—for such it really is—which will be inaugurated by this Bill. That responsibility will not rest with your Lordships' House, but with the House of Commons, and I think that any impartial man must add that it must be shared, though perhaps not in equal degree, by the two great political parties represented in that House.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I do not propose to detain your Lordships very long, but the matter is one which touches so very materially the common interests of the people of this country that I feel it would be wrong if the occasion passed without a few words from those who sit on this bench. It is true that the question before us is in a large measure an economic one, and on that side of the subject I have no qualification for addressing your Lordships, and I should be the less inclined to do so after listening to one so expert in this subject as the noble Earl who has just sat down But the question is one which may almost be called a moral one, cutting right down, as it does, into the ordinary life and responsibilities of the homes of this country, and those who specially represent the Church and moral interests in this House have a duty laid upon them to say something.

This question seems to bear directly upon the whole fabric of our social and domestic life. It is interesting to notice how many of the investigators of our social problems in recent years have found themselves thrown back upon this question as lying behind and dominating a very large number of other kindred problems. The question of our prosperity and social progress has been found to be closely concerned with the question of how we were dealing with our aged poor.

There is one whose name has, I think, had but scant justice done to it in the course of the debates on this Bill—I refer to Mr. Charles Booth. Beyond all question Mr. Charles Booth stands at the head of those who have investigated problems of this kind, and foremost of all at the head of those who have investigated this particular question. Some fifteen years have passed since Mr. Charles Booth published his great work—I can call it nothing less—upon the "Condition of the Aged Poor." The 500 pages or so of that book contain so many facts and figures marshalled in a manner so intelligible and, of course, so readable that no book of the same dimensions written upon any subject is comparable to it. Now everybody is tired of having the matter discussed, and considers the time has arrived for doing something. Each party in the State is practically pledged to do something in this matter, and I for one am glad we have come to the point of practical action.

I should like, however, to say just one word of caution about the simple, easy figures which are constantly being quoted in connection with this question in its general aspect. It is a commonplace in almost every speech introducing this subject that of the whole population over seventy years of age there are now more than 30 per cent. in receipt of poor relief. It is sometimes more sensationally expressed by saying that there are more than 30 per cent. of the aged who have nothing but the workhouse as a refuge in their declining years. That statement requires to be received with a little care and thought. There are a large number of our aged poor who after threescore years of honest work find themselves faced by no other prospect save one which is alike depressing to them and, I venture to think, discreditable to our social system. The noble Viscount who introduced the measure to-night dwelt upon that subject, and I agree with every word he said upon that branch of the question. All candid observers admit that where outdoor relief is now being given to the aged poor it is far too often miserably and utterly inadequate to meet the needs of the case, and boards of guardians have been increasingly tempted to fall back upon, and to trust to, what is known as "undiscovered sources of income." This is very often not forthcoming, and there is consequent distress. When we use the expression that there is no refuge for aged persons except the workhouse, it is, I think, in many cases a misleading phrase, and it would be a very great mistake if we were to accept it in its darkest significance.

Reference has been made by the noble Viscount to the action taken in 1899, to the circular then issued by Mr. Chaplin, and the recommendations it contained for special provision for the aged poor. When we hear the phrase that 30 per cent. of the aged poor have no refuge but the workhouse, it is but fair to remember that many boards of guardians have dealt with this subject in a manner which makes their action no small step. In the Poor Law Union of Bradford there are homes for the aged poor on lines which I believe bring the cost out at 14s. 6d. per head per week. Again, within a few miles of your Lordships' House, there is at Lewisham a board of guardians which is making provision for their aged and deserving poor at a cost of 19s. 6d. per head per week. These facts have to be taken into account, because we have been asked what will be the action of these boards of guardians when this Bill becomes law. One wonders what will these aged poor do, who are now the recipients of that kind of aid, if we ask them to accept as an alternative a pension on the scale under this Bill.

But the points I wish specially to make are three. The first is that the community has now accepted responsibility for these old people, and we must discharge it. The second is that the cost of this Bill must inevitably be very great, both in its direct incidence and also as regards that which it will ultimately involve. My third point is that, as we have been reminded that what we are doing now is only an experimental stage, we are entitled to watch very carefully to see how far it escapes certain perils. First of all the community as a whole has, it seems to me, by the decision of the House of Commons on this Bill, frankly accepted responsibility for dealing as a nation with the aged poor who are in destitution. I am glad that we have the Bill, and that we have reached the particular stage before us. Whatever be said for or against, it does distinctly accept on behalf of the nation a responsibility which we are now to endeavour in some mode or other to discharge.

My Lords, of course we have always accepted to some extent the responsibility for all our feeblest and most helpless people—the very young, or the very sick, or the very old, we have all along said we must do something for them. As regards the very young I do not think I need remind your Lordships in this House, after some of the debates of the last two or three years, that we have not been backward in seeing that we have a considerable responsibility as regards their welfare. As regards the sick I think the country hardly realises how great are the changes, the reforms, which have taken place in the last few years, both as regards our workhouse infirmaries, and as regards infectious hospitals, and in a hundred other ways in which, out of public funds, money is now being expended for the benefit of those who are not always in the extremest possible need, but are practically in very real need, because of the sickness which has fallen upon them.

But as regards the old, although in abstract theory we have been constantly saying that we accept some responsibility, we have not hitherto got beyond the stage of talking about it. We have had all sorts of schemes devised whereby those who ought to be in some measure specially tended and looked after are to be secure of such attention and care as they are unable to provide for themselves, but for the most part we have not got beyond the stage of discussing and talking about it. We have devised schemes, but have not given effect to them, and that is especially hard on that branch, that division of the people for whom, in their helplessness, we want to care; especially hard for this reason. It is, we ought always to remember, the very things which have of recent years conduced to our commercial prosperity and to our industrial success which have rendered more difficult and more hard the position of the aged poor.

I do not know how many of your Lordships are familiar with a remarkable book, written by Sir Frederick Eden more than a hundred years ago, upon "The State of the Poor." He says in that book that manufactures and commerce are the true parents of our national poverty. This is meant to be a paradox, and he proceeds to explain it, and the explanation which he finds so far as it was true then is a great deal more so in the facts of to-day. If we remember that our national prosperity, and the things which have contributed to it, press specially hardly upon the aged poor, it is, I venture to say, far more true that the modern conditions of industry do not favour the aged. Work is driven, driven faster and driven harder. It needs more nerve, and these changing methods, the constant changes on a big scale which very rapidly take place as to the manners for doing our work, do press specially hardly upon those who are too old to make new starts and new movements for themselves. Those very things, therefore, which have been the sources of our strength, of our progress and prosperity, have been pressing with exceeding hardness upon the aged poor.

It is even true, my Lords, of a great deal of our modern progressive legislation, which I have welcomed and for which I am exceedingly thankful. Take the Employers' Liability Act. I think there can be no question at all that within a few years it will be found that the ordinary working and incidences of that Act press with special hardness upon the aged poor and aged working men. For all these reasons it is indisputably the case that we are forced now in an exceptional degree to accept the responsibility which lies upon us for, as a nation, taking care of the aged poor throughout the land, both in town and in country. Anyhow, I do not think the fact of our responsibility and our acceptance of it, after what has passed in the House of Parliament which is specially responsible for dealing with our finance, can be any longer set aside. The time for acting has arrived. The Motion of the noble Earl who moved the Amendment to-night is plausible. I venture to think that perhaps in the force of his mature youth he is unable to recognise that a time ever does come when most people find that they cannot work as hard or do as much as in former years. That may be the explanation of the manner in which he has pressed upon us the Motion which he has brought forward

That is a plausible Motion at all events, but I regard as satisfactory the answer that was given to it by the noble Earl, Lord Cromer.

But there is one other point. Is it quite certain that the Royal Commission is going to deal completely with this? I am not in the secrets of the Royal Commission, but it consists of men about whom there is naturally a great deal of human nature. They are perfectly aware that Parliament has been dealing with this particular subject. Are we quite sure—I speak in absolute ignorance—that they, knowing that, are prepared to propound to us a cut-and-dried scheme which will relieve us of that responsibility? It may be so, but I at all events should like not to be too sure of it until I have seen their Report. Anyhow, I personally believe that the time for action in Parliament has come.

The second point that I want to make is that we must face the fact, whether we like it or not, that the cost of doing this thing is going to be very great indeed. So far as this is a Chancellor of the Exchequer question, I naturally leave it entirely alone. What it means in taxation belongs to another place. So far as this House is concerned, I believe that every Member of it is ready perfectly frankly to bear a considerable addition to his financial burdens for the public good, provided it is clear that the public good is going to be effected by a Bill like this, and all the more so because this House is often spoken of as thinking especially of our rural areas, and the questions of our countrysides. It is indisputably the case that the need is the greatest, and the demand in proportion will be largest for those who are the occupants of our rural areas. The population of England is increasingly urban, and in actual figures the larger number of those who will be beneficiaries under a scheme like this, probably belong to the urban areas. But if we take not positively, but relatively, the proportion, we find at once that the number of those who will be beneficiaries under this plan, is very much greater in our rural than in our urban areas. I have no figures as to the number over seventy, but I look to the figures we possess as to the relative position of those over sixty in our towns and rural areas. I find the figures to be these. In our urban areas there are sixty-five per 1,000 over sixty. In our semi-rural areas seventy-nine per 1,000. In our rural areas there are 111 per 1,000—that is, 111 as against 65. Putting that aside, we must face bravely the fact that the costliness, which I regard as altogether wholesome, will be great.

We hear it sometimes said that we need not be so very much frightened, because the £7,500,000, which we are told at present is the cost, will go in large measure to the relief of what is now expended under the Poor Law. But I imagine that it would be a very frail reed to rest upon to hope that a very large portion of that money will be found to be merely transferred by the authorities from one of those directions to another. This Bill, in my belief—and I want to face it fairly—is only the first step in a long and costly and toilsome road towards doing that to which we are setting our hands. But if the House of Commons, which specially represents in these kinds of matters the interests of the country, is, as now seems to be the case, bent on a non-contributory scheme, I go further and say it will not be long before we shall find that the limit of age will be a lower one than seventy. If you will examine the statistics which are put out by trade unions and by benefit and friendly societies, you will find they have found it necessary to begin pensioning men as incapable at a considerably earlier age than that. I think it is sixty-two or sixty-three at which they begin to feel such help is practically required. That is an object-lesson which it is impossible to ignore and put aside, and it is far better to face the matter now than to imagine that we are voting for something which is going to stop as it is, instead of, as I believe, something which will cost a great deal more than is supposed.

Then comes the whole question of our responsibility for the sick, the helpless, and the feeble. It will be absolutely out of our power if we once begin to regard as our duty the pensioning of the aged over seventy to avoid looking also for the aid which is to be given on what is technically called the invalidity claim. We have not very accurate figures about that in this country, but we have a very remarkable object lesson in that matter in the figures recently published in Germany. There we know that they began with the old-age pension and subsequently extended it to those who are incapable of work on the ground of sickness. Those figures show the rapidity with which the recipients of what they call infirmity pensions have advanced, as contrasted with the recipients of the old-age pensions. In 1897, in Germany there were 161,000 people receiving infirmity pensions and 203,000 receiving old-age pensions. In 1907 the old-age pensions had fallen to 125,000, but the infirmity recipients had increased to more than 600,000. If anyone will work out those statistics in detail it will be seen how closely the old-age and infirmity pensions are involved with one another. The figures are very full of lessons, in one sense of warning, if you regard it as a warning, to ourselves as to what we are doing now.

If I have dwelt unduly upon the figures it is because it leads up to the last point I want to emphasise. This is in one sense an experimental measure. That is one of the grounds, I suppose, upon which we justify going forward while the report of the Royal Commission is still pending. Let us realise then that it is an experimental stage, and that what we are doing is to have for the present an experimental character. Watch it then most closely and observe what the effect is. If the cost, as I believe will be the case, turns out to be very large indeed, there are obviously two perils by which we are confronted, and it is our bounden duty to take careful heed now lest those perils slip into a disaster. The first will be this, that, if some people have their way, a great deal of the money for old-age pensions will be deducted from one of the other objects for which we are at present expending such large sums. Already we have seen signs, which I for one deprecate, of what I believe to be a most mistaken policy of economy in elementary education in some of our urban and rural areas. We are spending something like £28,000,000 a year upon education—£17,000,000 from the taxes, £10,000,000 from the rates, and £1,000,000 from sundry sources. Will there be an equal readiness to spend all that money if at the other extremity of the scale—the end of life instead of the beginning—we are being called upon to spend these huge sums? I hope we shall be able to do both, but it will need careful watching to see that the funds for other purposes are not drawn upon and diminished—both those which come from voluntary sources, and those which come in a compulsory way—by reason of the greater drain which is made upon us for meeting these old-age pensions.

Then we have lying immediately ahead of us the Report of the Poor Law Commission and the problem of the able-bodied pauper. In whatever way we deal with that after the Royal Commission has reported, it must in some mode or other cost a great deal of money. Do not let us forget that these things are coming upon us at the same time as this other call, and, if we are to make old-age pensions not harmful, but helpful, we must see that the funds are not really being deducted from other funds for matters where our need is greater. We have in England a gigantic network of friendly societies organised either as trade unions or as sick clubs, or as great friendly societies, such as the Manchester Unity, the Foresters, and the rest, and the great co-operative societies. All those great agencies for good, which have a double side, blessing the men who are contributing as well as the men who are getting the advantage, will be placed in a position of increased difficulty when this Bill becomes law.

We have to beware during the experimental stage lest the kind of elements in the national character, which should find expression in those great societies, should be in any way harmed by the acceptance by the State of a responsibility which has not hitherto been laid upon its shoulders. It would be a disastrous thing if men who made provision against sickness, difficulty, and old-age—and made it on the basis of robust self-help, sometimes of self-sacrifice—should be daunted by this Bill in the endeavour which they have hitherto made. It would be a disastrous thing if we undermined that kind of work, either as regards its thrift and insurance side or as being a school of citizenship for our local government. If we did produce that result, it would be disastrous to the morale and fibre of the manhood upon which we rely. Therefore it is our duty during the experimental stage to watch with the utmost care the manner in which this Bill affects these various interests to which I have referred. I do not for a moment believe that it will affect them so disastrously as to make it undesirable that we should now go forward, but I think the matter needs observation and caution in a high degree. I want this Bill to pass, and if the nation will closely watch the course of its experimental stage, and will profit by whatever lessons emerge in the light of experience in our own and other countries which are making this experiment, I believe the result of this lesson will be such as to conduce in a high degree to the common good of the English people.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: That such a Bill as this should be called an Old-Age Pensions Bill is in itself a proof of the remarkable change which has taken place in the opinion of the country during a time within the recollection of most of us, on the subject to which it relates. Formerly, when we spoke of pensions we merely thought of an annual allowance given by an employer, whether the State, a corporation, or an individual, to someone who had worked for that employer, and had arrived at old age or been smitten with infirmity, an allowance given purely on account of services rendered to that employer. Pensions of that sort were given as a matter of right. They were given practically as deferred pay. They were invariab y given in return for services rendered definitely to the individual or body that gave them. I can remember myself when advanced politicians of that day, being also stern individualists and keen economists, objected even to that class of pension, mainly, I think, on the ground of some kind of prejudice from past days in which pensions had led to gross abuses. Now, advanced politicians take quite another view of what the word pension means. The interpretation placed upon that word by one of those Gentlemen in another place is that the veterans of industry have a right to a reward from the State. Who are the veterans of industry? Are they soldiers or sailors or Civil servants who have directly served the State? Not at all. Is it proposed by such persons as those to whom I referred that they should even be proved to be veterans of any kind of industry? No. The idea is that it is invidious to make any inquiry as to how a man has worked; whether he has worked at all or what work he has done. He is to have a right to a pension whatever his character, whatever his means, simply because he has performed what hitherto has been considered to be the ordinary duty of any citizen, namely, that not being possessed of sufficient private means for his own maintenance he has condescended to work for the benefit of his family and himself. That is the interpretation of the word pensions by the school of politicians to which I have referred. I am, at any rate, thankful that His Majesty's Government have not embodied that interpretation in the Bill now before your Lordships, and I hope it will never be accepted by this country. The Bill now before your Lordships was accurately described by the noble Lord, Lord Wemyss, as a Bill for extending out relief, which now can only be legally given to the destitute, to the comparatively poor, and the sole difference is that this new form of out-relief is to be administered not by the guardians but by the pension committee, and is to be paid not from the rates but from the Exchequer. These proposals are accompanied by what His Majesty's Government, I have no doubt, honestly intend to be safeguards, so as to secure that the undeserving shall not obtain the benefit of this new form of relief but shall be dealt with as now by the ordinary Poor Law. I propose to inquire how far those safeguards will effect their object.

But before doing so I wish to admit, so far as I am myself concerned, that in my belief it was necessary for any Government to endeavour to deal with the subject which is dealt with in this Bill. There has been a growing feeling in this country for a good many years past that the system of our Poor Law was harsh to deserving persons who had led industrious and creditable lives in the sight of all their neighbours, and who, arriving at an age which precluded them from working, are treated, so far as the law is concerned on the same footing as the idle and the dissolute. In the administration of the law, as the most reverend Primate has already said, I believe a real difference has been made, and the cases in which such persons as those to whom I have alluded have been left to the tender mercies of the workhouse would be found on inquiry to be very few indeed. They have received, as a rule, out-relief, but that out-relief has been as the most reverend Primate has said of a comparatively small amount, and so far, I am glad that this Bill should increase the amount which is given to persons of that class. Some stern economists may say that the whole thing is wrong; that such persons when they are young and healthy should make provision as may enable them to have something to live upon when they are old, and that even agricultural labourers who, as we all know, are poorly paid, are able to make such provision. My Lords, I quite admit that it is possible for persons in that position to make such provision, because many of them have done so, but to do this, especially in the case of a labourer who, say, between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five has to face the charge of a large and young family, certainly involves an amount of self-denial, determination, and thrift which, I am afraid, very few of us would possess if we were placed in similar circumstances. Therefore I feel that there is real ground for the proposition that the State should intervene, at any rate to some extent, in helping such provision to be made.

The first idea that became crystallised on this subject was the idea of contributory pensions. When Lord Salisbury's Government came into office in the year 1895 many schemes had been suggested for proposals of that kind, and it was my duty, as then holding the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, to obtain the assent of my colleagues to the appointment of a Committee, not of politicians, but of financial and other experts, ably presided over by Lord Rothschild, with the following reference. They were to consider the schemes which had been suggested for encouraging the industrial population, either by State aid or otherwise, to make provision for old age, with special reference to the effect of any such schemes on our friendly societies and on the encouragement of thrift among the poor. The reason in favour of contributory pensions in the abstract is a very strong one, because by that means you could automatically discriminate between those who were entitled to a pension and those who were not, which is a very difficult task if attempted in any other way; and secondly, you would lay down the principle, which surely is a right one, that it is the duty of everyone, so far as he can, to make provision for sickness or old age. That Committee inquired into all those schemes. They also inquired into a scheme prepared by Sir Spencer Walpole, one of their own number, but they were almost unanimous in their Report that none of those contributory schemes could properly be adopted. They gave strong arguments for that opinion. I will not delay the House by quoting those arguments, yet I will say this, that at the time when I considered the Report I was convinced that contributory pensions could never be regarded as a complete settlement of this question in this country. I hold that opinion still, and I think that the noble Viscount was right when he said that most of those who, in past years, examined carefully this subject came to the same conclusion. Other Committees followed. One in the following year suggested new proposals which would have involved so enormous a charge upon the Exchequer that certainly I always felt, that as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I never could have advised my colleagues to accept any scheme of that kind. Then the South African War broke out and the whole consideration of the matter had to be deferred, and I venture to say that there never was a time either in the remaining years of the late Lord Salisbury's Government or during the Government presided over by Mr. Balfour when this important matter could practically have been dealt with by the Government of the day.

Now, in their third year of office, His Majesty's present Government have brought this measure before Parliament. I was very much interested by what the noble Viscount so truly and so generously said with regard to Mr. Chamberlain's part in this matter. It has been a commonplace of speakers in the House of Commons and in the country belonging to the party which support His Majesty's Government to refer to Mr. Chamberlain's connection with old-age pensions as a mere bogus connection, and to accuse him of having made promises which he never intended to perform, and of having taken up the subject merely on political grounds. Nothing is more untrue. To no man is the credit more due, if any satisfactory solution of this question is arrived at by any party, than to Mr. Chamberlain. The noble Viscount referred to Mr. Chamberlain almost as the author of the Bill now before your Lordships, for he based its provisions on Mr. Chamberlain's opinion that contributory pensions in this country were impracticable. But he did not go quite far enough. Mr. Chamberlain, though believing that contributory pensions were impracticable, laid the very greatest stress upon the necessity of proof of real thrift on the part of those who would receive old-age pensions. I wish I could say that I find satisfactory provisions on that subject in this Bill. My Lords, what are its provisions? Let me take first the conditions which are to be fulfilled before pensions can be granted. The claimant must prove that he is seventy years old. I hoped that in his speech the noble Viscount would explain how that proof was to be given. Is it to be a mere statement by the claimant that he is seventy years of age? Why, if that was all I think that a very large part of the poor population of the United Kingdom, certainly of Ireland, would be found to be seventy years of age on the 1st January next. Is it to be required that the claimant shall produce a certificate of birth? I am afraid that there are many persons even in Great Britain who do not quite know where they were born, or perhaps have forgotten it, and could not find such a certificate on any consideration, and in Ireland, as we know, the complete institution of a system of registration of births is of much later date than seventy years ago. I think we are entitled to some information as to how the proof of seventy years of age is to be afforded. Then, again, the claimant has to say that he is a British subject, and has resided for the last twenty years within the United Kingdom. What does residence mean? Does it mean that soldiers and sailors or those in the mercantile marine and other persons who have been compelled by their duties to leave the United Kingdom for a certain time during that twenty years shall be excluded from these old-age pensions? Does it mean that a man, say, of fifty-one who perhaps, as a domestic servant goes with his master to Paris for a week is to be excluded on that ground from an old-age pension? I am quite aware that these things are to be dealt with by regulations, but we have heard from the noble Viscount that so far from this being a measure prepared in haste the whole Cabinet has had it under consideration for twelve months, and therefore we have a right, I think, to suppose that these difficulties of practical working have been thought over, and that they could acquaint us if they chose with the solution at which they have arrived. Some of these points were raised in the House of Commons, but others could not be raised at all owing to the suppression of free debate, and to none of them were satisfactory answers given.

Then there is the third provision that a man must show that he has not more than £31 10s. a year. You might conceivably arrive at the means of a poor man who was the inhabitant of a country village by inquiring of his employer what wages were given him, but the poor are very naturally reticent as to any private means that they possess, and certainly with regard to the town population, possibly even with regard to the country population anybody would have the greatest difficulty in finding out whether a claimant had more than the limit provided in the Bill. And let me just mention, in passing, one point that has a real importance in connection with the schedule of this Bill. The schedule provides that if a man has 8s. a week he is to get 5s. a week pension, and if he has more, so much less, until the pension is reduced to 1s. a week. What does that mean? Supposing a man and wife who are claimants for a pension under this Bill each have £1,200 in Consols. They would each be entitled to a pension of 1s. a week. Is not that absurd? Is not that practically almost a swindle on the taxpayer, and is it not an endowment by the taxpayers not of those old people who are claimants for pensions, but of the relations to whom this capital might be left by the pensioners? Take the case of a person who has no property but is in receipt of weekly wages. Supposing, for instance, an old man just seventy, is receiving 13s. a week, and his employer is doubtful whether the man does work enough for him to be able to continue his services at that rate of pay. What will happen? The employer and the workman will put their heads together, and the employer will say, "I will give you 8s. a week if you will get a pension of 5s." Is not that a revival of that vicious system of relief in aid of wages which was one of the worst evils of the old Poor Law? What I fear is that you will be liable to that kind of thing all over the country, and I defy you to check it under the provisions of this Bill. I turn to what is a more important matter. I have referred to the conditions which have to be fulfilled before the pension can be awarded. Let me turn to the disqualifications for a pension. I should have thought that a person claiming a pension would have to show at any rate that he was qualified for it by past industry, and that the onus of proof on such a point as that would rest upon the person applying for a pension. By the provisions of this Bill the onus of proof with regard to disqualifications rests on the pension authority. The pension authority, unless they can prove that a man has been in receipt of poor relief, or has been idle or in prison or in a lunatic asylum or is a confirmed drunkard, are bound to give that man a pension. There is no real proof of past industry whatever required in these qualifications, except that for twenty years before the pension becomes due a man has subscribed to a friendly society or a trade union. Take the disqualifications of pauperism or idleness. In a country village where everybody knows one another I have no doubt that the pension authority could obtain proof of such things; but when you deal with the fluctuating town population the greatest rogue in the world, a man who has been idle, who has been in prison or a confirmed drunkard, by simply changing his name and his residence will defeat all your inquiries and make it absolutely impossible to prove that he comes under any of the disqualifications of this Bill. This will not only lead to gross waste of public money, but to what is very much worse, to the inclusion in the list of pensioners of persons whom His Majesty's Government admits ought to be excluded from it. What I want to ask is how does His Majesty's Government anticipate that these inquiries shall have any effective result and why have they put the onus of proof upon the pension authority rather than upon the individual?

My Lords, those are the main safeguards of the Bill. But I do not say that there is no good in it. I admit, as I think the most rev. Primate said, that it will be a great boon to many poor and deserving persons that they should receive pensions under the Bill I admit that there is a very strong feeling in the country in favour of legislation of this kind, and, as I have said, I do not myself see how it is possible to settle the question by a contributory scheme. Therefore, I am not prepared with any alternative measure, but I must say one word upon a matter to which the noble Earl, Lord Cromer, has already referred with great force, the financial aspect of this Bill. I say nothing about the present year. There is money enough for the present financial year, but even with regard to this year there is one point as to administration which ought not to be forgotten. What is the great safeguard in the administration of out-relief under the Poor Law? Surely it is that boards of guardians know very well that if they grant out-relief to an applicant that out-relief comes directly out of the pockets of those whom they represent and perhaps very largely out of their own pockets. That is the safeguard for economical administration in the matter of out-relief under our Poor Law. Is there any such safeguard under this Bill? Well, there is the pension officer. The pension officer is the watchdog of the Treasury. I do not doubt he will do his best, as watchdogs of the Treasury always do, but the pension officer is subordinate to the pension committee. Who are the pension committees? The pension committees throughout the country will be persons who will almost invariably hold the opinion that if they can remove a burden from the rates and put it on the Exchequer it will be a very good thing to do. The inducement offered them is not to economise on administration of these old-age pensions, but to grant pensions freely in order that the applicant may not become chargeable to local rates. I hope they will be superior to the temptation, but human nature being what it is I am afraid that the future is rather dark even in that matter.

But, my Lords, when I come to the future possibilities of legislation it is a much more serious affair. During the progress of this Bill in another place Members belonging to both political Parties vied with one another in attempting to extend it, and His Majesty's Government in meeting those proposals had not the courage to say that they were wrong, but merely resisted them because at the moment they had not sufficient money to meet the demands. I fear that this Bill may be only the first letting out of the waters, and no one can tell how high the flood may rise. It is said that this is an experiment. I hope that means that it is not merely an experiment in the way of spending money, but that it is an experiment in the value of the checks devised to secure economical administration, and that His Majesty's Government are perfectly resolved that if any defects are proved they will be remedied.

What about the finance of 1909 in regard to this Bill? The noble Viscount said that this was an absurd inquiry. I quite admit that no Chancellor of the Exchequer will tell you anything about his intentions for the next year. I certainly would not have done it myself, but I never asked Parliament to pass a Bill which imposed burdens of this kind on future years and left them to be paid for in a way which was entirely unexplained. We have had some hints as to how the expenditure under this Bill is to be met. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has hinted at robbing hen roosts. He has hinted at processes of levying money from wealthy persons somewhat akin to those so-called benevolencies of the Middle Ages which, I believe, were often extorted by the extraction of teeth. But the Prime Minister has distinctly suggested what the noble Lord on the cross benches described as a raid on the Sinking Fund. For the past three years, thanks to a shilling income-tax, the Prime Minister has been able to plume himself on a very large reduction of the National Debt. Now it appears to be intended as far as we can judge from what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that the 1s. income-tax is to be continued *ad infinitum* in order to provide for old-age pensions. But, my Lords, I should like to call the attention of His Majesty's Government to certain important words which fell from the Prime Minister in his Budget speech in the House of Commons in the year 1907. He said—

> "If we are to have social reform we must be ready to pay for it, and when I say we, I mean the whole nation,—the working and consuming classes as well as the wealthier classes of direct taxpayers."

My Lords, so far that promise has been redeemed by the wanton repeal of £3,500,000 of the sugar duty, a tax specially bearing upon the consuming classes to whom the Prime Minister alluded, at the very moment when His Majesty's Government were imposing this new and great burden on the people in the name of social reform. I can only hope that next year those words which I have quoted may be remembered, and that if additional provision has to be made in the Budget for this burden it may be at least fairly divided between the different classes of the people.

The question of the moment is what course we are to take with regard to the Second Reading of this Bill. So far as my own personal feelings are concerned, I confess I very much sympathise with the Motion which has been made by the noble Lord, Lord Wemyss, though I am not sanguine that the Royal Commission on the Poor Law will report very soon, or that when they do report, their Report will be unanimous, and we all know that Reports from a divided Commission are not very easily carried out by any Government. But, my Lords, this does not seem to me to be a matter on which our personal feelings only can guide us. We have to think of the wishes of the country. I do not attach undue importance to what has been already more than once referred to, the almost unanimous acceptance by the House of Commons of the Third Reading of this measure. The House of Commons, even when nearly unanimous, may conceivably, though I think it is not likely, misrepresent the opinion of the country, and therefore even a vote of the kind in the House of Commons is no conclusive reason for any action on the part of your Lordships' House. But I firmly believe, that if it were possible under the forms of our constitution to refer the Bill now before your Lordships for the verdict of the constituencies, that verdict would be given by a decisive majority in its favour. I believe the Bill to be in accordance with the wishes of the country, whatever its faults may be. The responsibility for it rests with the body which is specially responsible for the finances of the country, the House of Commons, and we who sit on this bench feel that in these circumstances it is impossible for us to support a Motion which would put an end to the further progress of the Bill.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: My Lords, I frankly confess that if I were to consult my own private inclination, I should certainly not break silence on this occasion. I think there is no part so odious or so invidious as seeming in any way to offer objections to a large scheme of universal, or almost universal, benevolence, or one that would probably entail a scheme of almost universal benevolence. Speaking from the bottom of my heart, I believe this is the most important Bill by a long way that has ever been submitted to the House of Lords during the forty years that I have sat in it. I view its consequences as so great, so mystic, so incalculable, so largely affecting the whole scope and fabric of our Empire itself, that I rank it as a measure far more vitally important than even the great Reform Bills which have come before this House. I confess, to come at once to the Amendment of my noble friend, whom we heard with so much pleasure in such vigour at an age so greatly surpassing the ordinary span of man, that, if you take that Amendment in pure logic, it is extremely difficult to say anything against it. My noble friend says that you should wait for the Report of the Poor Law Commission before coming to a decision upon this Bill. His Majesty's Government have been a little unfortunate, owing to their enthusiasm for legislation, in more than once being unable to await pending inquiries before they proceeded to carry legislation into effect; and I do not know that on any occasion they have been so unfortunate as they have been with regard to this Bill. The most rev. Primate indeed, said it was not necessary to wait for the Royal Commission, because who could know that the Report of the Commission would touch on this subject at all? I have a better opinion of the Royal Commission than is expressed by the most rev. Primate. I cannot believe that they would have so grossly ignored all their duty as to leave this subject untouched. But, even if they did fall so far short of our expectations, we have been told over and over again from both sides of the House, from both front benches of the House of Commons, that this question of pensions for the aged is only part of the great problem of the Poor Law, and, therefore, as it is so essential, so vital a part, I cannot conceive that we should be doing wrong, logically speaking, in waiting for the Report of the Commission on the whole. But when I come to the practical bearings of my noble friend's Amendment I feel much greater doubts, and I must tell him at once that I shall not be able to accompany him and his teller into the lobby which they have projected for themselves. I cannot do so for very clear and obvious reasons. The first is that the Bill is an almost purely financial measure, coming up from the House of Commons with the almost unanimous support of that House after a division which, I think, only mustered ten against it in its final stage, and which had no division against it at all on its Second Reading. [Viscount ST. ALDWYN here whispered to the noble Earl.] I am wrong, but at any rate an almost equally insignificant division on the Second Reading.

A financial Bill coming up with this practical unanimity from the House of Commons it may be within your legal prerogative to reject, but I am quite sure it is equally impolitic for you to do so. More than this, it comes with the assent of both political parties. No one can forget—we have been more than once reminded of it to-night—that the question was started by Mr. Chamberlain somewhere about 1894 or 1895, and therefore if you sit on the cross benches and you are not pledged to either party in this matter, you must feel, quite impartially, that this proposal comes as a principle equal to both parties.

It comes, moreover, on the responsibility of one of the strongest Governments of modern times. It comes, we are told, after very careful examination for twelve months. It comes, perhaps, after inadequate inquiry—I think it does—but it comes with the authority of the House of Commons, with the support as a principle of both parties, and it is a financial measure. Therefore, I think your Lordships, if I may say so with all submission, would be acting with great unwisdom if you were to vote for a Resolution, which though in words, would only be a postponement, would yet in effect be the rejection of the Bill, because I know perfectly well that my noble friends opposite would say that if that Resolution were passed they must decline to proceed with the measure. Therefore, I beg your Lordships—I do not think you need my entreaty, because you have come to the same conclusion already—most earnestly, whatever the logic of my noble friend's Amendment may be, not to support it by your votes in the division lobby.

Having said so much, and having expressed a somewhat reluctant support of or assent to the Bill, I hope the House will bear with me for a moment when I express, not hostility to the measure, but the deep, solemn disquietude which that measure and its inevitable consequences produce in me. I will not to-night say a word about its not being on a contributory basis. In the first place, both front benches are practically pledged, I think, by the speech of the noble Viscount behind me, as well as more strongly by the speech of Mr. Chamberlain in 1889, against the contributory basis. In the second place, even if they were not so pledged, it is too late. When you have offered a gratuitous boon to the people, you cannot afterwards take it back and offer it with a new condition. Whether a contributory basis be right or wrong, I cannot for myself believe that what is practicable in Germany is impracticable in England. But, whatever the merits of a contributory basis may be, I do not think it enters into the region of practical politics at this moment. The day may come, when you find the heavy burden you have laid upon yourselves for this purpose, and the almost insupportable burdens that may follow from it, when, warned by the logic of experience and events, you may desire to return to the contributory basis, but, in my judgment, that time is not yet, Nor will I dwell on the pauperising effects, which have been so frequently dealt with by so many speakers in the House of Commons. There was a time when, certainly in Scotland, and, in less degree, in England, the maintenance of the aged of the family was a privilege that poor families would not surrender to the public or to the State. That time is passed, and I think we may say that, under the provisions of this Bill, it is never likely to return. Some of us may turn, with somewhat sentimental regret, to those days, and may think, with some regret, of the pauperising effect this Bill must inevitably have.

Again, I will not touch on the Socialistic effect of the Bill. It is, of course, Socialism pure and simple. Do not let us blind our eyes to that, even for a moment. Though I do not accept the rather cryptic utterance of a distinguished friend of mine, who has now passed away, that we are all Socialists now, I am disposed to think that we have advanced to that period of Socialism when some such measure as this is required, and that, though we may object to particular principles and to particular details, we cannot flinch from this Bill simply because it is Socialistic. But is it not an instance of what is going on daily and hourly in this country—the anxiety to lay every burden upon the State, to transfer every responsibility that can possibly be transferred from the individual to the State? I will refer to an instance that occurred only within the last few weeks. His Majesty's Government have set apart a fund, I do not know of what amount, for the purpose of entertaining strangers at the expense of the State. So far as I know, it has only been drawn upon to the extent of a dinner being given by a Minister which otherwise he would probably have given at his own expense. But surely that is one small object-lesson of what is constantly going on—the principle that the individual is to do nothing that can by any possibility be shifted on to the shoulders of the State. I do not think this principle is at all likely to be remedied in the future by the operation of this Bill. The money for this Bill must come from some fund or another. There is no gold mine at the disposal of the State to find the money for the Bill. The surplus which will be taken from some people to pay for these pensions for some other people will be the surplus which would be given to charities, and that will probably eventuate in a movement which may not be so remote as some of us think—the handing over the charge of the hospitals to the State.

But of this I am quite certain, that it must deal a mortal blow to all private pension funds, such as those to which my noble friend behind me only partially alluded. Every one of your Lordships and every estate owner in this country must have a private pension fund of his own. It very often takes the form of men who are quite unfitted to do a day's work being kept on at comparatively high wages, simply in the form of an old-age pension. What will happen to these men when the proprietor is taxed to pay universal pensions? Is it not extremely probable, I will not say certain, that the last state of those labourers, who exist, I venture to say, on every landed estate in the country, will be infinitely worse, by the operation of this Bill, than the first? What will become of the private pension funds of great firms? I see two heads of great firms, recent agreeable additions to this House, on the benches opposite. They probably have large private pension lists, pension funds used on a deliberate plan of their own. Will those funds go on under the operation of this Bill? Perhaps later on they may find an opportunity of telling us.

But, akin to this, there is another question. You have great friendly societies in this country. They have been the nurseries of thrift. They have stimulated thrift. They have stimulated self-respect. Has your plan the approval of the great friendly societies of the country? I understand that, by a very considerable majority, something like five to two, the friendly societies that have been consulted by the Government on this point are unfavourable to the Bill. Would it not have been better, would it not have been possible, by some association of the State with the work of the friendly societies, to have accomplished your object without the intolerable burden you are going to lay on the taxpayer in the future? I ask this question honestly and in no hostile spirit. I only wish that the Government should reassure us; but there are two more points upon which I must touch.

Your taxation for this purpose, if it does not inevitably lead to protection, will make a great many converts to protection. One great weekly journal has been fighting this Bill with all the courage of an intrepid editor on the ground that it must lead to protection. I myself do not go as far as that, but I am certain of this—that if you screw up direct taxation, as some of your Ministers say that they are going to do, you will make more converts to the doctrines of protection than all the speeches of my noble friends behind me, excellent as they are.

I must also express my deep regret that it has been found necessary to conduct the discussion on a Bill of such vital importance as this under the operation of what is called the guillotine. I am informed by those who have followed the progress of the Bill in the House of Commons that of the twelve clauses of which the Bill consists only four have been discussed at all. I feel that this fact does detract something from the authority with which it comes from a unanimous House of Commons to this House, simply from the feeling that it has practically received little or no adequate discussion at all. The only thing for which I do not regret the operation of the guillotine is this—that it seems to me that almost every day spent on it in Committee there was added a million to its cost.

I wish, however, to make an earnest appeal to the Government on one point, as to which I wish them to reassure me—I mean its effect on the Empire as a whole. I am beginning to think that this Empire, which has received so new an impulse of inspiration in the last twenty years, may be at last destined to be wrecked by its finance. After all, the maintenance of an Empire depends to a large extent on the defence it can extend to all its different parts. But the point which I think must be seriously considered—and I hope it has been seriously considered by the Government—is how far an enterprise or experiment of this kind, whichever you like to call it, can be carried on without serious risk to what is the first task of every Government, of every country, and of every nation—namely, that of national defence.

In the old days which have, unfortunately, long ceased to exist, the days of Gladstone, inherited by tradition from Peel, the policy was to cut your coat according to your cloth when you were acting in behalf of the nation, and that you should not enter into any financial liability without reckoning how much it was to be and how you were to meet it. No one can say that His Majesty's Government have performed either of those functions on this occasion. We have not been given any but the vaguest indication as to what the cost will be, nor any indication—that, perhaps is more natural—as to how the cost is to be met. It is true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a humour which would be more agreeable in another position, spoke of robbing hen-roosts and of an income-tax of 5s. in the £, which he seemed to look at with some avidity. But this can hardly be called an authoritative declaration on the part of the Government as to how the money is to be found.

Have you had any real inquiries as to what the cost is to be? It would not be difficult for the local authorities to arrive at some approximate idea of the number of people of the age of seventy who will receive this pension. Even though approximate it would have been some guidance to Parliament in the enormously important task you have invited it to undertake. Is the cost going to stop at £8,000,000 or even £10,000,000? Every one in this House and outside of it, who has given the slightest consideration to the subject, knows that there is no chance of stopping the cost at even £10,000,000 or £20,000,000 if it is pursued on the present lines. You have the Prime Minister telling us in the Budget that this was only a begining, and you have some of his advanced followers telling you with greater frankness, because they have not the responsibility of office, that they mean to use this Bill as a lever to obtain any amount more. But the inevitable course of events, whatever they may say, either from the extreme left or right of the Government bench, is that the measure means an indefinite extension of this principle.

My Lords, we know by a prominent example that looms in our eyes what the pension list is in the custody of a democracy. We have the case of the United States, where the pension list, which I think every friend of the United States believes to be something of a gross scandal, has risen to nearly twenty-eight millions sterling a year—a pension list, too, which does not touch old-age except it is connected with the Army and the Navy, a pension list, purely military in its operation, which, in the natural demand of the democracy that, when so much money is going, every man shall have his share, has swollen to that figure. What is the inevitable course of events in the party system of this country? Parliament, by the operation of its Septennial Act, will have a general election in due course. I do not wish to say anything which is not strictly courteous to either of the parties represented in this House; but do you mean to say that when the general election comes both parties, bidding for the favour of the democracy, will not emulously knock down every barrier that you have fixed to this pension, and raise every limit fixed by its operation? I said that there was the example of the United States; but the other day the Commonwealth of Australia, by an operation much more summary than our own, raised the old-age pension to 10s. and the age-limit was lowered to sixty-five, in a sitting which I do not think lasted twenty-four hours. Do you believe that in any general election in this country, when this principle is once introduced, both parties will not be naturally bidding for the favour of the democracy by lowering the age and raising the amount of the pension? It is calculated that this will probably amount to £28,000,000 or £30,000,000.

The most rev. Primate pointed out that there are many other objects for our care. I frankly admit myself that I do not regard the old person of seventy as the hardest case in our humanity. Take the case of the young widow with young babes left, by the sudden death of the breadwinner, without any means of support at all. Is not that a more painful case than that of the man or woman of seventy unable to lay by any of their earnings in a hard and long life? Take again the case of the blind, the people born blind, the people who have become blind. Is not that a case more painful than the old people of seventy? They are disabled by the act of God; they have never been on anything like an equality with the rest of the human race, as the old people of seventy have been. You cannot, when once the State undertakes the operation of charity, limit the sphere of your operations.

The most rev. Primate said it would cost us a great deal of money, and that it should be cheerfully borne. This reminds me of a story of James II.—it happens to be extremely pat—who asked two bishops whether their property did not belong to him. One bishop, prompt as a courtier, replied that it did. The other bishop, more cautious, said—

> "I think you may take my brother's property, for he says that it belongs to you."

I do not wish to labour the point, but I must put another aspect of the subject to the most rev. Primate in connection with the cost of the scheme which may touch him even more nearly. When this old-age pension movement first began there was a Conservative Old-Age Pension Association and a Liberal Old-Age Pension Association. The Liberal association was headed by my noble friend Lord Airedale, then Sir James Kitson, and his association said that there was no difficulty about the funds:

> "You have only got to disestablish and disendow the Church of England."

That observation may interest the most rev. Primate.

I do not wish to prolong this discussion; but I do wish that those who listen to me or who may read what we say to-night will bear in mind the enormous liability they are undertaking by this Bill. I myself see no limits to it. You have begun it, so far as I know, without waiting for inquiries, and there has been very little inquiry of your own. Is your trade so swelling, is your revenue so swelling that you think this to be a favourable moment to undertake this experiment? We have listened to a war Budget of £153,000,000; you have income-tax at 1s. in the £; I saw some rather gruesome figures this morning as to local debt and local taxation; to the £153,000,000 of Imperial taxation you have to add, for England and Wales alone, £114,000,000 of local taxation, and now at this moment you are going to take upon your shoulders a burden which is at present estimated at £10,000,000, but which, I venture to say, involves, with the greatest certainty in the world, a liability of £30,000,000.

The first responsibility of every country and every nation is national defence. I confess this prospect fills me with despair. I understand that the Government already acknowledge some liability in respect of an increase in the Navy for next year; and I strongly suspect that, in spite of the somewhat ambiguous proceedings of which we have read, they do not expect any material reduction in the Army. Surely the moment is ill-chosen for undertaking this vague experiment, so prodigal of expenditure, and I would ask the Government—I say it in no spirit of hostility, but in a spirit of earnest and deep anxiety—to meet some of the points raised in this debate, and to assure us that, in furthering and not opposing this boon which they offer to the old of the United Kingdom, we are not dealing a blow at the Empire which may be almost mortal, and that we are not embarrassing and encumbering our finances to a degree of which no man now living, however young he may be, will see the limit or the end.

THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON: I think those who listened to the debate this evening must have felt a sort of divided impression as to the general spirit which underlay the remarks and observations which were made on each side of the House. If I read aright what I may describe as the underlying spirit I should say that on one side there was an earnest, and shall I say almost a hearty, welcome given to the measure which is embodied in the Bill, but, at the same time, that there was an undercurrent also of grave apprehension, and if I interpret that spirit aright I should say that it expresses on the one hand the great and humane delight with which all those who are interested in the welfare of the old and the poor looked at the measure which was designed for their benefit, but, on the other hand, that there was no person who looked forward to the various conditions which might arise in the financial, economic, and perhaps even political, conditions of the Empire who had not somewhat of a grave misgiving as to what the ultimate results would be, not of the immediate Bill, but of those consequential measures which might arise in the future.

Now I suppose if that rightly interprets the mind and the spirit of those who spoke to-night I am not wrong in claiming that the Members of this House do sincerely sympathise with the needs and the vicissitudes of the poor and the aged, and I should like it to be felt in the country that the Members of this House did give to the Bill in this respect a very joyous, hearty welcome, because they were sincerely interested in the welfare of the old and the poor. But may I say this, that when we are looking at this measure we are looking at a measure which is designed to deal with the needs of those who have reached the supreme age of three score years and ten, and I conclude that many of us feel that when we contemplate that portion of the population we are contemplating those who are entitled to the opportunity of a quiet and retired life. So far I would desire to say that I am perfectly in sympathy with that spirit which, I believe, prevails in the House.

For a long time we have looked forward to this measure, and speaking for myself I had always hoped that I might live to see the day when some scheme of old-age pensions should be initiated in this country, and to that degree I rejoice that the opportunity has been found, and I think it ought to be understood, after the debate which we have heard to-night, that this is a measure which carries with it the consent, the ready consent of both sides of the House; in other words, that this is a national measure supported by a national spirit. But it would be a very unwise thing for us if we are to be simply content with saying to ourselves: "Here is a measure that we had hoped for, which will mitigate the lot of the poor and the old," and that we should stop at that point and not contemplate, as I feel sure every Member of this House has contemplated, the possibilities of the difficulties of the future. I do not wish for one moment to say any word which will take away from the earnest gladness with which, I feel, this measure has been brought forward, but still I do not think that any one of us should shrink from seeing that the future does require very careful consideration, lest in moving forward, we should take a step which may follow, but I do not think ought logically or necessarily to follow from the measure which has been introduced to-night.

This is the thought which, I am sure, has passed through many minds. Whenever a measure of this sort is brought in which deals with the interests of a large class of people, you may be perfectly sure that the tendency to increase and to develop that measure in other directions is almost irresistible. There is nothing which involves the expenditure of money which does not tend, from my experience, to enlarge before long. Commence, if you will, in allowing one single item of expenditure to grow in a certain direction and there will be every reason given you for that expenditure increasing in another. There is a natural but not a logical tendency, I say, to increase expenditure. Further, I desire to point out what, from my experience, is almost a necessary difficulty arising in the future. The difficulty and danger of dealing with those who are the working-classes of this country does not lie, I imagine, in the mere question of fixing an age-limit, but in the difficulty of ascertaining at what ages in various occupations the power of self-support ceases.

May I give you something of my experience in conversing with many of those who are interested in the manufactures of the north? Interested at the time in the proposal made for old-age pensions I had resort to those who were employers of labour, and the information I got was this. The age spoken of at that time was sixty-five, but as a matter of fact, no single man that I met could endorse the opinion that a pension beginning at the age of sixty-five would adequately deal with the needs of the great artisan population of the north. For instance, one man said to me that as a matter of fact in one occupation, in the making of what I may describe as the foundation of buttons, no man could earn his place in the shop after he was, say, fifty-five. He may earn good wages up to the time he was forty-five, but from that time his skill begins to decline, and by the time he reaches fifty-five, he is, from the employer's point of view, not worth his place. Now the moment you look at those conditions you see how the tendency to lower the age will commence. There will be circumstances, there will be cases, concerning which naturally, and perhaps rightly, appeals will be made, and therefore I am quite certain that when we contemplate this question of the old-age pensions fixed at seventy we must be prepared for movements which are likely to lower that age to sixty-five and to sixty, and even below that if possible.

Now, that being the case, I am quite certain I interpret rightly the feelings which underlay the expressions of many of those who took part in the debate to-night. It was the apprehension of the future. This experiment has been tried in New Zealand. What has been the result? It was started there, I believe, ten years ago. In the year 1900 the expenditure in old-age pensions amounted to £157,000; in the year 1907 the expenditure had just doubled. It was £314,000. That was due not merely to the increase in the numbers, but it was due to the fact that in the course of those years the amount of the pension increased from £18 a year to £26. I only mention that as an illustration of the tendency of which I have spoken, the tendency to do better. What was said by Lord Rosebery is surely true. The danger of the strife of political parties to bid against each other for the votes of the people is, of course, one of those dangers which I trust all who take a genuine and high-minded interest in the welfare of this country will have in mind in order that they may avoid that temptation.

May I go a step further? It is not merely a question of either the amount of the pensions being increased or the age being lowered. There is another element, and it is to this that I would most earnestly direct the attention of this House. We are living in the presence of a great and grave national danger which I do not think has even yet been fully realised by the people of this country. We are living in the midst of a population which is not increasing as it was wont to do. The birth-rate, which was 36 per 1,000 about twenty-five or thirty years ago, has dropped to from 27 to 26 per 1,000. That means a considerable reduction, remember, in the increase of the rate of population. The effect of that is that if you were to take the population and throw them into groups you would find that the numbers of young had proportionately decreased to the total population. At the other end of the scale you have that very interesting and inspiring feature, the lengthening of life. Through all the circumstances and conditions of modern life the age of man has increased. Four or five years, I believe, has been added to the age of men through the changed conditions and agencies of modern life. But what then? The proportion of the old to the population is far greater than it used to be, and the important feature in the population of this country is that the young are fewer in proportion and the old are more numerous.

The number of those under fifteen has decreased within the last twenty or thirty years to such an extent that there are 1,200,000 children less than there were, in proportion to the population, but during the same period the numbers of the old have increased, and we have 500,000 people above sixty years of age more than we had in time past. I trust that the Members of this House are earnestly considering the significance of that. Is it true that we are slowly moving on to a period in which the old will be multiplied, and the young will be diminished? Is that a condition of things which we can contemplate with equanimity? My own feeling is that the dangerous decrease in the birth-rate and the increase in the length of life mean that you are face to face with this, that claims for your pensions will be continually increasing, and the number of the productive workers, the power and energy of the country, will be sensibly diminished. That is my fear. I am not afraid of seven or eight or ten millions of money spent in benevolence in this way; the country in its wealth can well bear it; but when I ask myself whether the nation will always be able to bear it, when I ask myself whether this diminution in the birth-rate means the diminution of the worker, and of the earning power of the country, then I am bound to ask myself whether it is wise for us not to watch carefully lest the scheme which is begun with the best intentions in the world should afterwards be developed in such a shape as might indeed threaten and menace the financial integrity and power of the country.

I have only one other word to add. My Lords, there is something in nations which is of more importance to them than mere financial prosperity. The accumulation of the power of wealth which enables nations to raise a considerable revenue through taxation, gives the stamp, as it were, of prosperity, but the best asset of a nation is a manly, vigorous, and numerous race, and the best asset of the race is that the character of its men and women shall never be impaired. A Frenchman once wrote a book concerning what he called the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, and in the course of that book he pointed out what he believed to be the one essential factor which contributed to that superiority. He said that in all the history of English life one spirit had prevailed, and that was the spirit of self-reliance. He turned to his countrymen and said "The danger which we are in to-day is that we are not rearing our population to self-reliant habits." He drew the picture of the little farmer in Normandy who would stint himself and live in an unclean and even unwholesome dwelling in order that he might leave a sufficient sum to his children. He pointed then to the English farmer who, he said, so far from crippling himself in order that his sons may be well started in the world, takes the strong and independent line and says, "I made my way in the world and I expect my sons to do the same." "In other words," said the French writer, "the race across the Channel has educated its children in the habits of self-reliance, and to this habit is largely due the superiority and the strength of that race."

Now I cannot help asking myself, and I feel sure that is the thought which has been passing through many minds to-night, whether we are not in danger, not now, not to-day, but in the future, of dealing with this question of financial support in such a way that we undermine that spirit of self-reliance out of which the strength and the power of the British race has largely grown. That seems to me to be by far the most important question involved. It is character which makes, as it were, for the generous strength of a race, and it is character alone which can give them the security for true and abiding riches. Therefore it is that I cannot help asking myself whether there may not be a danger of its being weakened in the future.

I speak not of those of seventy years of age who are to receive the benefit of this measure. Their characters are formed, their conditions are settled. We are going forward to-night and saying: "Let us help them, let us give to them something which will ease their later years, and if a few have not deserved, well, we will at any rate with large heartedness, forget those who were weak and deal largely and generously with this matter before us, for all these men or women of seventy naturally appeal to the pity and sympathy of our hearts." But when I look beyond and ask whether it is conceivable that we may begin so to hold out the thought that men may be able to receive from the State that which in olden days they won by their own strong labours, self-denial, and thrift, then I am apprehensive lest we should, in attempting to do a good, do a great and grievous wrong, robbing ourselves and our children of that which is the best inheritance, the inheritance of a sturdy, strong, self-reliant manhood, that will take upon itself the responsibilities of life and be equal therefore, to the responsibilities of Empire. I think none of us can shut our eyes to the fact that there are among us people who are very ready to shirk responsibility, and I, for one, would feel that the whole system and condition of English life had lost its meaning and value if once we should act in such a fashion as to remove responsibility, and the sense of responsibility, from the people of this country. We are in this world for responsibility; through responsibility we grow and rise to the height of character which Divine providence intended us to reach. Let us not, by any action of ours, weaken that which is the best thing we can preserve, the character of the population, for out of that, and out of that alone, will spring the strength and the stability of the nation.

*THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (The Marquess of RIPON): My Lords, I do not rise to offer any observations on the eloquent speech of the right rev. Prelate. I understand him to be in favour of the Bill, and that he thinks the general policy of the measure is a sound and wise one. He has pointed out some difficulties in the present position of the country which I know, from his previous speeches, press hardly upon him, but with them I need not deal on the present occasion.

I come at once to the speech of my noble friend, who I do not see in his place at this moment, Lord Rosebery. My noble friend, as he always does, made a very forcible and eloquent speech against the whole principles and objects of this Bill, and, carried away with the stream of his eloquence, he ended by telling us that the passing of this measure would, he held, lead to the ruin of the Empire. I think my noble friend went somewhat beyond the possibilities of the case when he made that lugubrious statement. At all events, I cannot but feel that the course which my noble friend intends, as I understand him, to take in respect to this Bill to-night, is not the course which ought to be taken by the man who made that speech. I quite agree with my noble friend, Lord Rosebery, and with the noble Viscount opposite, Lord St. Aldwyn, if I understood the advice which he tendered to the House, that it would be in the highest degree inadvisable that your Lordships should, by passing the Amendment moved by my noble friend, Lord Wemyss, practically destroy this Bill. I myself feel that no course could well be more inadvisable for your Lordships to take than that.

The Bill comes up to this House with practically the unanimous support of the House of Commons. It is really part of the Budget of the year, and, if you reject this Bill, you will leave the Finance Bill when it comes before you in a very singular position. Looking to all that has passed upon the question, looking to the fact that both parties in the State agree that it is necessary and right to take a decided, clear, and distinct step in the direction of old-age pensions, I cannot but think that to reject this Bill would be contrary to what I have often heard my noble friend the Leader of the Opposition describe as the proper course to be followed by this House in respect to measures which come up from the House of Commons. I cannot conceive a measure, looking at its purpose and its circumstances, which it would be less desirable and less justifiable that your Lordships should reject. I do not expect that that will be the case.

I must say that I look to the Amendment of my noble friend, Lord Wemyss, as undoubtedly equivalent to the rejection of this Bill. My noble friend does not conceal the fact that he dislikes the measure and the principle on which it is founded, but he has availed himself of the opportunity of asking your Lordships to postpone the Bill upon the plausible ground that a Commission is sitting to consider questions connected with the Poor Law, which in its Report will probably deal with matters cognate to the object of this Bill. The most rev. Primate told us in the earlier part of the evening that he was not sure whether that Commission would touch upon the question of old-age pensions at all. Upon that point I agree with my noble friend Lord Rosebery. I think it highly unlikely that, after all that has passed and is passing on this question, the Commission will pass over this great subject of old-age pensions and say nothing about it. But I do agree with the most rev. Primate that we do not know when that Commission may report. We hope that it may report before the end of the year, but we do not know.

The Commission are engaged in a very difficult, and very extensive, and very complicated inquiry. I should be the last man to complain that they have devoted too much time to that inquiry, or press them to give us their conclusions before they have fully considered the case and come to deliberate decisions. But after all that has taken place in regard to this question, after both parties in this country have agreed that the time has come when we must take a great step in the direction of making some adequate provision for the old age of the poor of this land, I cannot think that the fact that we have not got the Report of this last of the many Commissions that have been looking into the subject is a reason for postponing to an uncertain date dealing with this question. The adoption of the Amendment of my noble friend Lord Wemyss means the rejection of the Bill. That may not be intended, though I do not think my noble friend would shed many tears if that were to be the result of his efforts to-night. But I do say that I think it would be a very grievous misfortune, both for the country and for the true interests of your Lordships' House, if you were to avail yourselves of a sort of side wind set blowing by my noble friend for the purpose practically of rejecting this Bill.

But there is one man in this House who ought to vote, if I may be pardoned for saying so, against the Second Reading of the Bill. That is my noble friend on the cross benches. He told us that the system that would be established by the Bill would probably lead to the ruin of the Empire. If he really thinks that, if that is his deliberate opinion, grievous as would be in all respects, in my opinion, the rejection of this measure by your Lordships, he should vote for the Amendment. I am bound to say—my noble friend, I hope, will pardon me—that if I entertained the views to which he gave expression to-night I should feel myself compelled to vote for anything which would put an end to a danger so tremendous as that which filled the imagination and stirred the eloquence of my noble friend.

The noble Earl in one part of his speech touched upon a very important question —namely, the views entertained by the friendly societies of the country and the effect which the Bill would have upon their interests. He told us that the majority of those societies were opposed to the Bill. I believe that is a perfectly correct statement, but that is the majority of the individual societies. I believe, on the other hand, that the large majority of the total members of those societies are favourable to the Bill. I cannot doubt it. If you look at what passed in the House of Commons you will see that those who are specially the representatives of the friendly societies are amongst the keenest supporters of the Bill. Many of them do not think that it goes far enough. Many of them would like to see it extended and altered in various ways, but they were all included in the overwhelming majority that passed the Third Reading of the Bill. I observe that the noble Viscount opposite, Lord St. Aldwyn, most justly included among the number of friendly societies the trade unions. There cannot be any doubt, if you look at the votes in the House of Commons, that the special representatives of trade unions are altogether in favour of the Bill. Therefore, I do not think it is accurate to say that the Bill is in any way regarded with dissatisfaction by the large majority of members of trade unions. I believe, on the contrary, that it has received, and that it will continue to receive, their cordial support.

The noble Viscount opposite raised certain questions as to the provisions of this Bill in various respects. I quite admit that the clauses of the Bill relating to the points upon which he touched are very general in their language, but I think the noble Viscount did not give sufficient attention to the fact that it is intended under the Bill—it is the declared intention—that the Local Government Board should issue regulations for extending and explaining more fully the intention of those clauses. These regulations, when they are issued, will be open to the criticism of your Lordships' House and of the other House of Parliament, and if they are inadequate, if they are still obscure, if they do not express sufficiently definitely and clearly the meaning of the provisions, then, I venture to say, will be the time for calling in question the nature of the regulations and requiring their future amendment. I can assure your Lordships, so far as I know, that it is the intention to make those regulations full and satisfactory, and that it is the desire of the Government that they should explain clearly and unmistakedly the full meaning of the clauses to which the noble Viscount alluded.

The noble Viscount—and as I am referring to him so often, perhaps I may be allowed to thank him for the tone and the manner of his speech, and for the character of the criticisms in which he indulged; he treated the Bill and its authors with perfect fairness, and I have nothing but thanks to offer him for his speech—the noble Viscount made some observations with respect to the position of the pension officer, and spoke of the extreme difficulty which the pension committee would experience in deciding on the various questions relating to disqualification. It will be the duty of the pension officer to act, if I may be pardoned for using the expression, as a sort of *advocatus diaboli* in these cases. It will be his business to discover all the imperfections which he can find in the claim of any person to a pension, and I think that in most districts of the country it will not be beyond the powers of a competent officer, with all the means he will have at his disposal, to discharge that duty, and to place the pension committee in the full possession of all the circumstances of the case.

The committee will then have to consider whether those claimants are, or are not, qualified under the Act and the regulations which are to be made, and although I daresay mistakes will be made, and that the pensions committees, like many other public bodies, will be subject to error in this matter, yet I believe that generally, with their local knowledge, they will have the means of arriving at a tolerably fair decision in respect of these cases. I should not be surprised if sometimes they were thought to be unduly particular in regard to the questions brought before them. But, if they fail, there is an appeal to the Local Government Board, and I think that in that way we have sufficiently provided for the protection of the public purse, and against pensions being given to persons who are unworthy to receive them. I am far from saying there will be no errors—individual errors, errors of committees, errors of various bodies, particularly at first; but I think when you get the scheme in operation there will not be any great reason to suppose that the persons concerned will not deal adequately with the questions submitted to them.

It has been said over and over again, in the course of this discussion to-night, that this question is largely experimental. The noble Viscount opposite said he hoped—he is a supporter of the principle, as I understand, of old-age pensions—that when reference was made to the experimental character of the measure, it did not mean that the principle of old-age pensions was to be experimental. This is the true interpretation of our intention. We do not mean the principle to be experimental. We could not make it experimental if we tried. Pass this Bill, and you have established, in one form or another, old-age pensions. But what is experimental, and what must be experimental for a time, and what it would be very unwise and injudicious for any Government not to treat as an experiment, is the mode in which this novel system is to be administered. That I admit to be experimental. Upon that we hope to be able to form better opinions, more sound opinions if you like, as the result of experiment, but the principle that there is to be henceforth established in this country for the benefit of the aged poor a system of pensions founded upon the broad principles of this measure is not with us a matter of experiment.

At this late hour I will not follow the noble Viscount into the financial questions upon which he touched. I am much too unequal in matters of that kind to enter rashly into combat with the noble Viscount. I will only say this. We intend to watch carefully the result of this experiment. We have made it deliberately. We have made it with the overwhelming consent of the other House of Parliament—that House which is the special guardian of the finances of the country. We have made it not hastily, but with great deliberation, as my noble friend the Chancellor of the Duchy told your Lordships earlier in the evening. We have made it in the conviction that the time has come to confer this boon upon the most unhappy and the most suffering people of the country. We have done it in the belief that it is a proposal which has received the sanction of both parties through a long period of years, and that we shall be able to carry it out, not by party effort, but by the combined determination of men of all political parties in this country.

There is one question which has been singularly little touched upon in the course of this discussion. Before the discussion began I confess that from what I heard out-of-doors, and from the rumours concerning the views of various distinguished and eminent noble Lords in this House, I anticipated a considerable discussion on the question of whether these pensions should be on a contributory basis or not. We have heard nothing, or almost nothing, on that. I think my noble friend on the cross benches rather indicated that he would have liked a contributory scheme. That that is impossible is my firm conviction. After what fell from my noble friend Lord Wolverhampton, I need scarcely remind your Lordships that the most complete exposition of this policy of old-age pensions is to be found in the lucid and able speech made by Mr. Chamberlain in 1899. You have the whole thing in that speech. Mr Chamberlain showed beyond all doubt that you could not in this country establish a system of contributory pensions. My noble friend on the cross benches said it was done in Germany, and why could it not be done here. This country is not Germany. There are many things which are done in Germany which you cannot do here, and there are many more things done in that country which I hope we shall not do here. I do not believe that because there is a contributory scheme in Germany, therefore it is possible that there should be one in this country. I hold Mr. Chamberlain's speech to be absolutely conclusive against any contributory idea. There is one argument against it which in itself is conclusive, and that is that if you established a contributory system you could not bring it into force for a very large number of years—my right hon. friend the Prime Minister the other day put it at twenty years, but Mr. Chamberlain in 1899 put it at forty years. Nine years have elapsed since 1899, and if, therefore, you were to adopt a system of that kind it would be practically thirty or fifty years from the time when this question was first brought forward and hopes were given to the poor that something would be done, before you could give them the advantage of this system. To my mind that is a conclusive argument.

I believe that it is the intention of my noble friend to take your Lordships' opinion by a division. I am sorry to hear it. I can only regard the Motion that he has made as one for the rejection of the Bill, and as made in a spirit of hostility to its proposals; and I hope that when my noble friend the noble Marquess opposite addresses the House he will not abandon the principles which he has sometimes laid down as to the conduct of this House in respect of questions which excite the deepest interest in the House of Commons, and I hope he will advise your Lordships, whether you like this Bill or not, whether you think its provisions the best that could be invented or whether you do not, not to stand between the poor people of this country and the advantages which would be conferred upon them by this Bill.

LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, the importance of the present Bill is by no means to be measured by the addition which it will involve to the burden of our taxation, enormous as that will be. To propose a policy which will involve an expenditure of many millions, without any sufficient provision of funds, seems to many of us to be reckless finance, and yet the effect it will have on the habits, the well-being, and the character of our people is even more important.

There have been five Committees or Commissions on this subject; three were of experts, two of politicians; those of experts were all against, those of politicians were in favour, though, to do them justice, not in favour of this particular Bill. It may well be doubted whether this Bill really represents the opinion of the country. Ten days ago *The Spectator* suggested a form of petition against the Bill, and I had the honour of presenting it this afternoon. Considering that only a week has elapsed since it was drawn up, the response has been extraordinary. It has some 2,000 signatures, and I am informed that of those who have seen it there were scarcely any who did not sign. It is not only a City petition. No doubt it does represent the views of the bankers and merchants, of the insurance offices, of Lloyds, and of other commercial bodies; but it is also largely signed by lawyers and medical men, by many of those engaged in education and charitable work, and last, not least, by working men.

This is a very difficult and complex question. What steps have the Government taken to arrive at a wise decision? There is a Commission sitting on the Poor Law. Have they consulted the Commission? There are the great friendly societies which have done so much for thrift and to promote the well-being of the working classes. Have they consulted the friendly societies? Yes, they were consulted; but the Government have legislated without waiting for their answer. There is the Charity Organisation Society, and their invaluable secretary, Mr. Loch. They give their time and thought to these difficult problems. They are men of great wisdom and experience. They were not consulted, and they are profoundly convinced that the course proposed is a terrible mistake.

I need not enlarge on the inestimable work which friendly societies have done for the elevation of our people. Their opinion is entitled to most serious consideration. And what is their view? Mr. Dempsey, the grand master of the greatest of all—the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows—in his annual address said that—

> "He thought the present old-age pensions of the Government were as unsatisfactory as any proposal could be. In his opinion any non-contributory system of old-age pay was Poor Law relief, by whatever name it might be called, and from that point of view the scheme was objectionable. . . . It would be more accurately described as an encouragement of improvidence than as an old-age pension. The scheme must be highly detrimental to their own and similar societies."

This is evidently the general opinion of the friendly societies. On the 17th of January, the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies issued a Circular to the societies asking their opinion on the effect the old-age pensions would produce. This was not ordered to be printed till June 15th, and was not issued till too late to influence the debate on the Bill. That it should have been hurried through just before such an important document was issued seems to me, I confess, very unfair to the House of Commons and the country. Mr. Sim, the Chief Registrar, in his circular letter, said—

> "The Chancellor of the Exchequer has undertaken to introduce this session a Bill to deal with the question of old-age pensions. It appears to me that a non-contributory scheme may in many ways vitally affect the friendly societies, and I desire to obtain the valuable opinion of those who, like yourself, have had a long and intimate experience of the Friendly Society movement as to the effect of such legislation upon friendly societies in general, and in particular as to the membership. I should be obliged, therefore, if you will kindly answer the following questions:—
>
> "(1) Will, in your opinion, the passing of a non-contributory Bill conferring old-age pensions have an injurious effect on friendly societies?
>
> "(2) What will be the effect on the thrift of the classes from which the members of friendly societies are drawn?
>
> "(3) Has the intention of the passing of such a Bill already affected, in any way, the membership of societies?"

To the main question asked by the Registrar, over eighty friendly societies unhesitatingly say that the Bill will be injurious, while only about half that number approve it. The Tendring Hundred Provident Society of Essex say that the proposal will—

> "have a disastrous effect."

The Midland District Miners' Relief Society say that the expectation of the Government Bill—

> "has effectually destroyed any chance of its (the proposed superannuation scheme) being adopted."

The Essex Provident Society state that—

"a non-contributory and universal scheme of old-age pensions would bring about the utter collapse of registered societies which provide for the sickness and incapacity of their members during their life-time."

The Dunmow Friendly Society say that they are now continually met by—

"the objection that it is not now necessary for men to provide pensions for themselves when the State will shortly do it for everyone."

The Royal Standard Benefit Society say that they find the feeling of young men is that—

"they do not see why they should trouble to make provision for themselves as the State is going to look after them."

The London Stationers' Provident Society have had—

"no applications for membership since the announcement that the Bill was to be introduced."

The United Kingdom Railway Officers Association say that—

"it will have a disastrous effect, as there will not then be the same inducements for men to join as now."

The Suffolk Provident Society say that—

"conferring old-age pensions without contribution being made will soon lead to discouragement of thrift."

The Bolton United Oddfellows say that—

"A State pension of a non-contributory character will certainly not help the friendly society movement."

The Boston Society say that the Bill will be—

"the death-blow to thrift among the working classes."

The East Suffolk Hand-in-Hand Society says—

"The success attained by societies in the eastern counties which made old-age pensions compulsory for members many years ago among the poorly paid agricultural labourers is evidence that, notwithstanding many declarations to the contrary, the well-paid artisan in the towns could easily afford to contribute to an old-age pension."

A contributory old-age pension would encourage thrift, but this one it is evident will, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, have exactly the opposite effect. It has other disadvantages. It makes no provision for infirmity. I understand that the experience of the Colonies has already shown that children are beginning to cease to feel any obligation to support their parents. I have shown that in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, the Bill will be a great discouragement, if not fatal, to thrift.

And now I come to the question—cannot our people provide old-age pensions for themselves? They do in Germany, and yet their wages are lower. The Board of Trade in their most interesting "Memoranda" of 1903, taking the wages in Great Britain at 100, estimate those in Paris as eighty-six, in Berlin as fifty-seven, and those in other German cities and towns as sixty-three. We might, they say—

"Without great error, take the average for Germany as two-thirds, and for France three-quarters, of that which prevails in the United Kingdom."

The Memorandum also shows that as regards the cost of necessaries the English workman is much better off than the German workman. Writing on the condition of the working classes in 1886, Sir Robert Giffen, the respected head of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, expressed the conviction, for which he gave conclusive evidence, that the wages of artisans had risen at least 100 per cent. Since then they have gone up some 15 per cent. more. But even this is not all. The hours of labour have fallen to an extent which, I think, may safely be estimated at 20 per cent. Sir Robert continues—

"The great rise of money wages among the labourers of every class, coupled with stationary or even falling prices of commodities on the average, the all but universal shortening of the hours of labour, the decline of pauperism, the enormously increased consumption of the luxuries of the masses, the improvement in the rate of mortality, these and other facts combine to prove that there has been a great general advance in well-being among the masses of the community."

Coming down some years later, the Labour Commission, in their Report of 1894, said that—

"Work-people of this class earn better wages, work fewer hours, have secured improved conditions of industrial and domestic life in other respects, and have furnished themselves through trade unions and friendly societies with means of providing against the various contingencies of sickness, accidents, and temporary want of employment. The classes who compose the lower grades of industry, regarded as a whole, have probably benefited no less than the skilled workers."

The poor have also had the boon of free education, and this alone would be enough to enable them to provide a pension for themselves. The price of an ounce of tobacco a week put by at and before twenty-five is more than sufficient to provide an old-age pension of 5s. a week at seventy.

The Board of Trade Memorandum of 1903 shows that our working men have the advantage of higher wages, lower prices of necessaries, and shorter hours than those of Germany. Surely, then, what German working men are doing, Englishmen might do. Nay, more they have done in thousands of cases, and but for this Bill would do more and more. And yet, as we understand, His Majesty's Government have not thought it worth while even to inquire into the German system.

The estimated cost of the Bill is £7,000,000. That, however, is only the first cost. The ultimate charge will almost to a certainty be much heavier. On whom will this fall? Perhaps I shall be told that this will depend on future Budgets That, no doubt, is true as regards the first incidence, but the ultimate burden will in any case mainly fall on the working classes. The tendency of the Bill will be to reduce wages. This has been so keenly felt in the Colonies that there have been proposals to make it illegal for pensioners to work for wages. Any such provision would be out of the question here, nor would it be effective. The effect of these pensions on the labour market will be the same as that of the almost indiscriminate outdoor relief before 1834. Practically, then, the poor lived partly on wages and partly on outdoor relief. That will be the case under this Bill. As regards the aged poor, you may call it a pension, but whether you admit it to be outdoor relief or disguise it under the alias of a pension, the effect on wages will be the same. As Lord Morley has truly said—

> "I have never disguised my view that the great and central interest of the workman is that he should have good and steady work. Beware of any action which artificially disturbs the basis of work and wages. Be sure of another thing, that the burden of taxation, however spread, however disguised, at last falls heaviest upon the shoulders of the industrial community."

Even in the first instance, consider how the Bill will work. So far as you throw any part of the additional cost on the necessaries of life it is clear that the working man will pay. So far as you throw it on the income-tax, or on luxuries, the argument is not quite so self-evident, but it is equally true. Whatever amount you take out of pockets of the middle classes or of the richer classes they must provide by diminishing either their savings or their expenditure. But in either case it would have been spent on labour, and if the expenditure is less, the amount spent on labour is less. In every ton of coal which costs 25s., over 24s. is spent on labour; if a house is built, over 90 per cent. of the cost—I might say over 95 per cent. is labour. Even if it is spent on foreign commodities, they are paid for by English commodities and the result is the same. If this Bill costs £7,000,000, to that extent it will diminish the amount which would have been spent on wages. It must, therefore, inevitably lower wages or increase the number of unemployed, or both.

I do not think that working men have realised the inevitable effect which the Bill will have to lower wages. That was the result of the indiscriminate grant of outdoor relief in the first thirty years of the last century, and was one reason for the establishment of the present Poor Law. These pensions will have the same tendency. They are merely general outdoor relief. You may call them pensions, but this does not prevent them from being outdoor relief. It is really a misnomer to call them pensions. A pension is either deferred pay, as in the Civil Service, or it is a benefaction from a generous employer to a good servant. But these so-called pensions are not given by the employer. They are sums taken by the force of an Act of Parliament from one person and given to another. Even if this Bill would add to the comfort of the working classes, which I doubt, we must ask ourselves what effect it will have on character and habits, and remember that, after all, character is more important than comfort.

The question, then, for the thoughtful working man, as it is for us, is—supposing we are going to devote £7,000,000 to ameliorate the condition of the poor, is this the best use to which it can be put? The German system, for instance, provides not only for old age, but for infirmity. One man at seventy may be stronger than another at fifty. But then, my Lords, we are told that whatever your Lordship's opinion may be we are bound to pass this Bill because it was adopted by a large majority in the other House. But recent elections have clearly shown that the balance of parties in the other House no longer represents that in the country. Let us, however, look at the majority a little closer. It was no doubt large. But it must be remembered that the Bill was by no means adequately discussed, and secondly that the Government have 260 votes in the House of Commons more than they are entitled to by the votes they received in the country. Deducting 260 from 305 reduces the real majority for the Bill to forty-five; no doubt a substantial, but not an overwhelming majority, especially as we know that it was obtained on a variety of questions—free trade, Chinese labour, education, and others which have nothing to do with old-age pensions. The number of abstentions was also remarkable and significant. In fact, not half the House voted. It may well, therefore, be doubted whether that majority really represents the opinion of the country.

I omit many other difficulties which will arise in practice. How, for instance, is the age to be ascertained? Will not practically any man who looks old and wishes for 5s. a week be fairly sure to get it? One great function of this House is to lay the facts before the country, and give our countrymen time to make up their minds. That is what we suggest now. If ever there was a case in which this should be done, surely this is one. We plead, then, for delay, because the Bill has not been adequately considered in the country, and has not been fairly discussed in the House of Commons; because it would involve an immense increase of taxation, perpetuate poverty, lower wages, and discourage thrift.

*LORD WELBY: I am afraid I cannot reply to the appeal, which my noble friend Lord Cromer addressed to me, because I rise to give an unhesitating support to the Bill of His Majesty's Government. I am truly glad that His Majesty's Government have introduced this Bill, because I think it of the very highest importance for the public interest that a promise to the working-classes should not be made lightly, and should not be left for an indefinite time unfulfilled. I believe that to do so in the present state of public opinion is very dangerous to the body politic, and when once that promise has been given, and when once such general assent has been given, I may say on all sides, to the principle, the time has come when there should be no further delay in dealing with the subject. This promissory note has been drawn a long time, and it is full time it was honoured. The measure that has been brought in now has been spoken of as the greatest social measure since 1834. In one respect I could agree with that saying; that is to say, I think it is part of the greatest social measure which dates from 1834, and that when the Poor Law question is dealt with as a part of and as a supplement to this measure the whole will form the greatest social measure since the year named. But like many noble Lords I have felt considerable disappointment in my own mind that it has not been found possible to find a contributory basis for the scheme. During the long time that this question has been before the public I have thought a great deal about the possibility of finding a contributory basis, and it is only with great reluctance that I find myself in agreement with so many higher and greater authorities that a contributory scheme is impossible so far as old-age pensions are concerned. There are so many difficulties attending it—difficulties connected, for instance, with bringing women under a contributory scheme, the difficulty of the long delay that must happen before a properly constituted contributory scheme could come into force, so far at all events as old-age pensions are concerned, and, lastly, the great difficulty in dealing with anything that sounds like compulsion as applied to the vast number of the labouring classes who earn very small wages. If Sir Robert Giffen is right and there are 1,750,000 workers who receive less than 20s. a week, it appears to me that to enforce in any form a contribution from such wages would be extremely difficult even if it were practicable in this country. I notice that in his very ingenious speech in the House of Commons my friend Mr. Harold Cox said, if I understand him, that thrift should be treated like education and made compulsory. I can understand the gentle compulsion of telling a father that his boy must go to school free of charge, but that is a very different kind of compulsion from the "stand and deliver" kind of compulsion which makes him take a part of his small wages out of his pocket. But in this case we are only dealing at present with old-age pensions. It is only a branch of the subject, and as Mr. Balfour has said, I think wisely, it is impossible to wait for an all-comprehensive scheme, which would mean practically waiting for ever. Therefore, there are other questions connected with provision for the working classes, as has been said before, which have to come up and come up very soon for decision, and, at all events with regard to them I do not entirely abandon, and I think that a great number of people do not abandon, the idea of some form of contribution towards the charge. I allude to such cases as provision against infirmity and sickness before the age for old-age pensions arrives, and I note, if I may say so, with satisfaction that the Prime Minister in speaking of a contribution expressly debarred himself from being supposed to shut the door against the possibility of contribution in the case of other aspects of the Poor Law question.

But one other great and very grave objection has been taken to this Bill. It is said that the Bill is thoroughly faulty in its finance, or perhaps I might say in its want of finance. The Bill has been spoken of as a *post-obit* Bill—as a Bill which draws upon the future and provides no asset by which the promise can be defrayed. Even Mr. Balfour, speaking in much more moderate terms, said that it was a question in his mind whether, if there were to be £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 spent for the benefit of the working classes, this was the best way of spending it, and he spoke of such a sum as that as an amount of taxation which would inflict very considerable hardship perhaps upon the working-classes. Of course that is a very serious question, but I observe that all these objections are based upon the assumption that there must be for the purpose of this Bill—and we are only dealing at present with this Bill—a large increase of taxation. I do not think that that assumption is proved, and I will venture to ask the House to allow me two or three minutes so that I may endeavour to prove my case. I must refer, in endeavouring to prove it, to the arrangements connected with the National Debt. It is now rather more than thirty years ago that the present arrangements were made under which a fixed sum was set aside to meet the interest and Sinking Fund of the debt. Sir Stafford Northcote, when he introduced that scheme, made what is a dangerous thing for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to do, namely, a prophecy that if the arrangement he then made of £28,000,000 a year was left to work for thirty years untouched, at the end of that period—that would be somewhere about 1905 or 1906—£232,000,000 of the Debt would have been paid off. It is a curious fact that when the thirty years were up, or just about that time, no less than £217,000,000 had been paid off. But that was in spite of the fact that during eight years of that period the Sinking Fund had been suspended, and also that twice during that period the sum set apart had been diminished by two financial authorities of the greatest weight in this country—I mean Lord Goschen and the noble Lord, Viscount St. Aldwyn. Now, my Lords, I venture to think that Lord Goschen and the noble Viscount opposite, when they diminished the sum so set aside, practically laid down the canon of finance, which I should say would be good for all time, that when a large sum was set aside for the extinction of Debt, from time to time the public should have a certain share of the financial benefit arising from the diminution of Debt. How does that stand at the present moment? At the present moment the sum set aside for the charge of the Debt is £28,000,000 a year. I reckon that next year the charge of interest out of that sum will be £18,000,000. That leaves the Sinking Fund at the present moment—or rather next year—at £10,000,000. Such a sum is beyond anything that has ever been dreamed in dealing with finance in this country. It is to my mind an enormous sum, and it falls distinctly under the noble Viscount's canon, namely, that the public is entitled to a share in such a large economy of the public expenditure as is involved in the Sinking Fund of £10,000,000. When the noble Viscount made his reduction of this sum, and when he took £2,000,000 off the provision made, the whole amount applicable to the reduction of Debt was under £7,500,000. Therefore, at that time the Sinking Fund had reached nothing likethe present sum.

Now, my Lords, I come to this, which I am endeavouring to put before your Lordships as the reason on which I base my belief that for the purpose of this Bill a very large increase of taxation in the immediate future is not involved and is not necessary. A certain sum, as your Lordships are aware, has been provided in Mr. Asquith's Budget this year to meet the charge at the commencement of next year. That sum, again, will be to the good in the following year, and then, according to my humble opinion, it will lie with those responsible for the public finance to consider whether, out of this enormous sum of £10,000,000 applicable to the reduction of Debt, provision may not be made in order to meet a great social problem, they ought not to settle and redeem the promise which has been held out for thirteen years, and has never been dealt with. It will lie with those in authority to consider whether, in order to make a reasonable settlement of this question, it will not be fair to follow the example which has been set in past years, in cases where the Sinking Fund has been trenched upon to meet ordinary expenditure and not to meet a great emergency, whether the time will not have arrived when a large contribution might be made out of this accumulated Sinking Fund, and thus render unnecessary any large addition to taxation. Of course, I do not know the intention of the Government, as I am speaking only of my own impression of the matter, but from some rather nebulous words used by the Prime Minister at the time of the Budget I think that some idea of thus dealing with the Debt may have been in his mind. I do not know, but all I can say is that if that were the case, I can only admire the skill with which during the three years he has held office, he has built up a position which will enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he choose, when the necessity arises, to deal with this great question with very little, if any, addition to taxation. That is the ground upon which, my Lords, I venture to put before you the opinion which I have formed, that in reality the Bill now under your consideration is not so faulty in its finance as has often been stated.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, if I rise to say a few words in regard to this Bill it is mainly because I feel that unless I say something the noble Earl who leads the House may feel relieved from the necessity of addressing your Lordships. What I have to say matters little, for the arguments I intend to use have been put before the House with great force by previous speakers. But I venture to express the hope that in the speech to which we shall presently listen from the Leader of the House we shall be vouchsafed more information with regard to this measure than we have yet received from its ministerial apologists. I do not think any of the speeches which we have heard from the noble Lords opposite have shown sufficient appreciation of the momentous character of this Bill.

I venture, indeed, to express my concurrence with what was said by the noble Earl on the cross benches, that, in his belief, no more momentous measure had in our time been laid on the Table of the House. Up to the present, I do not think any attempt has been made by noble Lords opposite to take up the points that have been raised in the speeches which have been delivered on this side of the House. We have been assured by the noble Marquess, Lord Ripon, that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to watch the progress of this great experiment. We have not been told how it is intended to control the progress of that experiment. We have not been told how it is hoped to prevent the abuses and to remedy the anomalies with which the Bill bristles, and we have not been vouchsafed a word of information, until the noble Lord on the back bench got up, as to the sources from which this colossal expenditure was intended to be met.

Let me say at once for myself, and I believe for those who sit near me, that it is very far indeed from our intention to show any reluctance to deal more liberally than heretofore with the needs of the meritorious poor. I think it is universally conceded that, at certain points, the present law might be made to work in a manner more considerate and humane so far as certain classes of those who receive relief from the rates are concerned. But this Bill goes a great deal further than an attempt to supplement the shortcomings of the existing Poor Law system. As I understand this Bill, it is a measure which can have no other effect than that of completely undermining the present Poor Law system. The noble Earl who moved the Amendment said, I think with great force, that the passing of a new Poor Law in 1834 marked a great epoch in the history of the working classes of this country. It was the legislation of 1834 which relieved the people of this country from the incubus of pauperism. It was under the influence of that Bill that, as wages increased, as the prices of the necessaries of life diminished, as greater powers of combination were accorded to the working classes, they began to practise increased thrift, to show a greater amount of independence and of self-respect, and it is, surely, true to say that no class of the community in the recent past has made such rapid and remarkable progress as they have made.

What is going to happen? Just at the time when it might fairly be said that the old taint of pauperism which lingered so long in many parts of the country was finally and entirely disappearing, you bring in this new measure, which, call it what you will, is a vast measure of thinly disguised outdoor relief. I believe this Bill will cut very deeply indeed into the life of the nation. The old lesson which we have been endeavouring all these years to teach our people is that they should shun dependence upon the public purse and that it should be the first duty of a citizen to make some provision for his own old age, and, if possible, for the old age of those most nearly related to him. That lesson, I am afraid, this Bill is going to unteach, and I agree with my noble friend Lord Avebury in believing that its effects on the country will be profoundly demoralising.

But, my Lords, if this new form of assistance from public funds is demoralising to the recipients, I do not think it will be less demoralising to those who will be allowed to distribute this largesse. We in this country are with every year that passes becoming more and more bureaucratically governed. This Bill is going to create a new and huge bureaucracy, a bureaucracy with a Minister at the apex of the structure, with a great department subservient to him, and with agents and committees all over the country. This bureaucracy will have the distribution of a sum which now stands at £8,000,000 a year and probably a great deal more—a vast patronage to be distributed under conditions of the most extraordinary elasticity, or rather I should say laxity. I am afraid that Parliament itself is not likely to escape from the same demoralisation. You now render a Member of Parliament liable to severe pains and penalties if he resorts to any practice that may be described as bribing his constituency. But is it not perfectly certain that once this Bill becomes law you will have Members of Parliament going down to their constituents and asking them to vote for "Mr. Smith and old-age pensions at 60?" Is not that a form of bribery of the most dangerous and insidious kind? The pressure will be continuous and irresistible. This Bill is fenced in with so-called limits and restrictions. Many of them are of the most arbitrary, if not the most preposterous, character, and, just as you were driven in the House of Commons from one position after another while the Bill was passing through Committee, so I venture to predict that in future will those who administer this Bill be obliged to do so with ever-increasing laxity. I think that has been made plain in the case of Ireland. Those who know that country can form some idea of the manner in which the loosely-drawn clauses of this Bill are likely to be interpreted by the pension committees who will be entrusted with the task of giving effect to them.

One thing is perfectly certain. You think that you are going to stop at £8,000,000; but the barriers are sham barriers which you cannot trust. The devices to which you resort in the Bill for ascertaining the age of the recipients, their means, their antecedents, are devices which will not stand the test of experience. Is it not the case that already your good resolutions have been forgotten and ignored? Is it not the case that six weeks ago the Prime Minister announced that—

> "No Chancellor of the Exchequer in his senses, considering the needs of the country and its taxable resources, would think of adding £3,000,000 to the £6,000,000 which this scheme is going to cost"?

Two millions out of the three millions have however been added within the last six weeks, and, unless we are very much mistaken, the Government are already committed to modifications of their scheme which will add three or four millions more to the expense.

If we look beyond the limits of the Bill itself, have we not good reason for being alarmed at what I might term the by-products of this Bill? There is one which has been referred to already and which fills me with special apprehension —I mean its effect upon the payment of the Public Debt. I listened to the speech delivered just now by the noble Lord on the cross benches: the noble Lord is an expert and I am not, but the impression left upon my mind was that his proposal—not a proposal made on the authority of the Government, but merely a contribution of his own—certainly involved some departure from the established practice of successive Governments in dealing with the Sinking Fund. If that is so, I venture to doubt whether the remedy of my noble friend may not be worse than the disease.

This Bill will cost the nation as much as a great war would cost. But there will be this difference, that you can pay off your war debt by making sacrifices in order to do so. But this is a liability from which I do not believe the country will ever be able to emancipate itself. There is this further difference—that a war, terrible as are its consequences, has, at any rate, the effect of bracing the moral fibre of the country, whereas this measure, I am much afraid, is one which will weaken the moral fibre of the nation and diminish the self-respect of our people. With the exception of the noble Lord who spoke from the back benches just now, no attempt has been made to show how these colossal sums are to be provided, and I invite the noble Earl the Leader of the House, who is about to address us, to give us at least some indication as to the manner in which this is to be done.

Is the financial situation of the country so satisfactory that you can afford to incur a liability which may be anything from ten to twelve millions with a light heart? You have not yet paid off your war debt. You have paid off only about one-quarter of the 160 millions which were added to the Debt for that purpose. The income-tax still stands at a war level, and the greater part of the indirect taxation levied to defray the expenses of the war still remain. What are your prospects? Every farthing of your visible resources is, so far as we are able to judge, already mortgaged. And not only is that the case, but you have actually, with your eyes open, postponed liabilities which in the view of many of us properly belong to the year through which we are now passing. And the Chancellor of the Exchequer chooses this moment to boast almost that he has a stunning deficit, a falling revenue, and depressed trade. Those are the circumstances in which this immense addition to the obligations of the country is made.

I desire to associate myself with what was said early in the evening by my noble friend Lord Cromer as to the effect of this increased liability upon the resources and the safety of this country. The drain upon our resources which this Bill necessitates cannot help weakening the ability of the nation to meet a great emergency should such a great emergency occur. Can we dismiss from our minds the idea that such an emergency is possible? My noble friend Lord Cromer and I have both been, if I may so put it, during recent years behind the scenes in European diplomacy, and we both of us know that there have been moments when the political tension was so great that a rash act or an ill-considered word might have created a conflagration in which this country might not improbably have been involved.

When we look around, I do not say in Europe but all over the world — in India, in the Far East, in Persia—are all the indications so propitious that you can dismiss as altogether improbable the idea that this country might be called upon to put forth its strength for its own preservation? Should that moment come we shall want not only that strong Army for which some of us have so often insisted, not only that powerful Navy which I believe both parties desire to maintain, and which we have been lately told is the only effectual means of ensuring the commerce of this country against risk—we want not only those things, but just as much as we want a reserve of men and ships so we want a reserve of national wealth. And if our national resources are drained, as I believe it will be necessary to drain them in order to provide the necessary funds for this measure, as surely as we stand here we shall, should that emergency ever come, find ourselves infinitely weaker to encounter it. I should like to ask whether any European financier would not tell you that in his eyes this country, after assuming the obligations of this Bill, will stand in a very much weaker position than heretofore among the great nations of the world.

A good deal has been said during the course of this debate with regard to the possibility of a contributory scheme, and I am well aware that high authorities have dwelt upon the difficulty of giving effect to such a scheme. The difficulty which is usually the most insisted upon is that it would involve a great deal of inquisitorial investigation into the antecedents and position of the people of this country. We are told that in this country such an inquisition would not be tolerated, although it may perhaps be tolerated in foreign countries. I should like to put it to the House whether, if this Bill becomes law, it will be possible to give effect to it without the most inquisitorial inquiries into the means, into the age, into the character of the recipients of these pensions, unless the taxpapers of this country are to be robbed wholesale.

Then the noble Marquess said that in his view a fatal objection to a contributory scheme was this, that it would not be possible to bring it into operation for a great many years. Is it quite clear that it would be beyond our ingenuity to devise some means of bridging over the intervening period and making some arrangement to provide for that period so that a contributory scheme might come into operation after a certain period of years had passed? I am by no means convinced upon that point, nor am I convinced that arrangements which have been found perfectly workable in Germany and Austria should be so entirely impossible of adoption in this country.

But I wish to notice for one moment an argument which has been often advanced, and which is to this effect, that this is really a contributory scheme, because the working classes of this country already contribute to the taxation of the country and, therefore, to the funds from which these pensions will be provided. I cannot bring myself to believe that that is an argument which can be sincerely advanced by those who use it. I dare say many of your Lordships are familiar with a calculation which has been not infrequently quoted of late, and which shows what is the amount of the annual contribution to the National Exchequer made by a person who does not pay income-tax. I believe the figure—it has not been challenged, so far as I am aware—is £1 6s. 11d., and of that sum in round figures £1 represents the amount paid by the person in question by the taxation of the alcohol and the tobacco which he consumes; so that, if he happens not to consume alcohol or tobacco, his contribution to the public revenue stands at 6s. 3d. per annum. Is it seriously contended that that is a contribution to the revenue which would justify the grant of an old-age pension to the person who makes it; that for the 6s. 3d. per annum he is to be entitled to an old-age pension of 5s. per week? The argument seems to me to be a grotesque one, and I cannot regard it as serious. I regard it with particular suspicion when I remember that it is advanced by a party which used to have for one of its first principles the doctrine that taxation and representation should go together.

Then, my Lords, we complain of the extraordinary precipitation shown by the Government in pressing this Bill on Parliament. The country is expecting the report of the Commission on the Poor Law as a whole, and the noble Lord who has charge of the Bill announced the other evening that the keystone of the whole position was the reform of the Poor Law. We understand that it is to be reformed, and cannot conceive why you should not have had the patience to consider the question of the reform of the Poor Law, together with old-age pensions, and to present to the country a well-thought-out scheme dealing with both branches of this most important question. I also agree with Lord Avebury that it is a matter for regret that you should not have taken more pains to ascertain the views of those who are directing the affairs of our great friendly societies. It would surely have been worth while to use them as allies, and to endeavour to discover a scheme which they would have regarded benevolently, and which, so far as their opportunities admitted, they would have supplemented to some extent.

Well, my Lords, I have recapitulated briefly the reasons why we regard this Bill with great apprehension. There remains the question how, having these feelings, we ought to deal with it this evening. There is a well-established practice which to a great extent precludes this House from dealing with the financial proposals of the Government of the day, but we have never parted with our right to reject a Bill although it may deal with financial questions, and it would be competent to us to reject this Bill. But for the reasons already given by other speakers I for one should certainly hesitate to recommend that course. The arguments seem to me to be conclusive against it. We are confronted, in the first place, with the unanimous Resolution of the House of Commons in 1906, which the noble Lord put in the forefront of his argument. Then we have to take into consideration the fact that this Bill, though not strictly speaking a money Bill, is essentially a Bill of a financial complexion. It indeed forms part of the financial arrangements for this year proposed by His Majesty's Government. Then we have also to bear in mind the fact that it has been supported by colossal majorities in the House of Commons, and that when the sense of the House was taken on the Second and Third Readings only a small forlorn hope amongst those who usually act with us were found ready to go into the lobby against it.

In these circumstances, it seems to me that, however much we may dislike the Bill, we should gain nothing by rejecting it or delaying its progress. Were we to do so it is impossible to conceive that His Majesty's Government should not bring the Bill back to this House again next year. But a great deal would happen in the meantime. I have no doubt that noble Lords opposite and their friends would seize with avidity the opportunity of representing your Lordships as having attempted to rob the aged and deserving people of this country of the kind of assistance which most of us would be glad that, in some form or other, they should receive; and the difficulty would be increased for us by the fact that we should be represented, not without some *prima facie* justice, as having endeavoured to encroach upon that well-established privilege of the House of Commons which gives to that House almost undisputed control over the finances of the country. In these circumstances, were we to reject or postpone the operation of this Bill I am afraid we should not greatly advance the views which we hold, and we should, on the other hand, very considerably impair the opportunities which this House possesses of making its influence felt in controlling the legislation presented to us.

For these reasons I express my concurrence with the noble Lords who have spoken from this side, and who, while making no secret of their disapprobation of many of the provisions of the Bill, have stated clearly that it is not their intention to go into the lobby with the noble Earl who has moved the Amendment. I trust that when we arrive at the Committee Stage this Bill will be fully discussed, and I feel sure that the Government will not in any way desire to stifle such discussion. Nor do I believe that, in dealing with a Bill of this kind, they will desire to insist unreasonably on the privilege of the House of Commons. I have always been one of those who believe that, if that privilege was pushed too far, the House of Lords would be deprived of all opportunity of interesting itself in a great deal of our most important legislation. This House is placed in a somewhat embarrassing position. If I believed that any good would come by delaying the progress of this Bill, I should certainly advise your Lordships to delay it. If I had that feeling I should not hesitate to separate myself from those with whom I usually act, and to support my noble friend's Amendment. But, holding the views which I have endeavoured to explain, I have come to the conclusion that the wiser course is to throw upon His Majesty's Government the sole and entire responsibility for a measure which we regard with great apprehension, and which, we fear, may have far-reaching and disastrous effects upon the future of this country.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, the criticism to which this Bill has been subjected on the Second Reading stage is of two distinct kinds. On the one hand, there are those who consider the whole Bill a mistake, who are hostile both to the principle of old-age pensions and to the manner in which it is proposed to grant them, and are either going to vote against the Second Reading or have expressed their desire to do so but for other reasons which seem to them to carry weight. On the other hand, there have been speakers from the other side of the House who, in varying degrees, have given vent to somewhat ominous prophecies as to the effect of the Bill, and particularly as to its finance, but accept the principle, in some cases even accept the general lines on which the principle is carried out.

Among the uncompromising opponents of the Bill I am sorry to include the noble Marquess who has just sat down. Not for the first time we see something of a rift on the front bench opposite. The noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn, took a very different tone. He made some very pointed and searching criticism of the details of the Bill, but he took it as a *chose jugée* that there were to be old-age pensions and old-age pensions on a non-contributory basis, whereas the noble Marquess desires to wash his hands of the whole business. I am sorry, also, to include among the opponents of the Bill, the noble Earl, Lord Cromer, with whom we are sometimes, I am glad to think, found acting in accord. The noble Earl's principal objection is really a domestic matter between himself and this side of the House. His main objection to the Bill, as I understand it, is that he considers its introduction a serious blow to the cause of free trade.

*THE EARL OF CROMER: One of them. There are others.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: One of his main objections, I think I may say—at least the noble Earl devoted a considerable part of his speech to its discussion, and, in passing, I most cheerfully recognise the immense assistance which the support of the noble Earl to that cause has been to us on this side of the House. The noble Earl, I think, argues in this way. Here is this great expenditure involved—seven or eight millions—and it would be very easy for the tariff reformers to go to the country and say—"We have a cheap and easy way of finding this money." I should be inclined to agree with the noble Earl's conclusions if I thought his premises were correct. If, of course, it be true that the country does not really want old-age pensions, then we are undoubtedly committing a folly, and, if you like, also damaging the interests of free trade, in expending this money for that purpose. But is that so? At any rate, many noble Lords on the opposite side of the House would, I think, be found to say that, in principle, both parties are committed to the provision of old-age pensions.

So, then, I ask the noble Earl, from a free trade point of view, if I am right in thinking that old-age pensions are what the country wants—and in my belief, of all the social reforms set before the country this is the one on which the working classes have most set their heart—if I am at all right in thinking this, what, from the free trade point of view, would be the effect of going to the country and saying, We free-traders are bankrupt in this respect; we cannot provide you with old-age pensions, whereas the noble Lords opposite say that they can provide ten millions of taxation on manufactured goods and I know not what else, and that they will set apart this money for old-age pensions? If that is the attitude in which we free traders are to go to the country I confess that we do not go with a very good case, because the noble Viscount (Viscount Ridley) and his friends undoubtedly could provide the money for old-age pensions. It is true that the ten millions have been allocated to a great number of objects. They have first been made to disappear altogether by saying that foreign goods would not come in at all. They have been also formally allotted, I think, to the reduction of the income-tax; still they have been and may be again allotted for old-age pensions.

Reference has been made by Lord Wolverhampton to the care with which this measure has been thought out. I question whether any measure brought before Parliament in living memory has received so much close attention and such an amount almost of daily care from the Government as were given to this Bill. It is desirable to say this because sometimes it is implied that we have hurled down on the Table of the House an undigested scheme which has received no proper consideration. As a matter of fact I do not believe that there is a side or a possibility connected with the question which has not been thought out and discussed. We may be right or we may be wrong in accepting some alternatives and rejecting others, but I assure the House that the alternatives have been considered. But, however much you may consider, there must be always in a scheme of this kind some points of uncertainty. No amount of consideration can make uncertainties certain; and that is why we say this, the Bill must necessarily be regarded as a tentative and experimental scheme. That lays us open to criticism, perhaps, as to detail, which we will heartily welcome; and if with regard to those parts of the Bill which your Lordships may think yourselves competent to deal with suggestions are made which are of a practical character, I can only say that my noble friend will be only too pleased to give them every possible consideration.

We have heard something about contributory schemes. I do not desire to dwell upon that side of the question now. The noble Marquess said that, after all, one of the arguments—although it is by no means the only argument—against a contributory scheme is that it would not come into force for a long time, possibly, as Mr. Chamberlain said, for forty years, and it would not be possible to persuade people to subscribe their money, unless the scheme were compulsory, for so long a period ahead. Oh, but that period might be bridged over, says the noble Marquess. The only way I know of bridging it over is by having a non-contributory pension—that is, by doing what we are doing now. There is nothing whatever to prevent the noble Marquess and his friends opposite in the time to come from hitching a contributory scheme on to this scheme. I do not say whether they would be wise in doing so, but I daresay your Lordships saw that letter in *The Times* of 19th March last, signed by several eminent men, wherein it was proposed that that very thing should be done—namely, that you should begin with a non-contributory scheme, and later on combine a contributory scheme with it.

In regard to the noble Earl's Amendment as to whether this measure ought to be postponed until the Report of the Poor Law Commission has been received, I quite admit that at first sight it appears a somewhat plausible contention, but I have not heard to-night anyone suggest in what respect or at what point this measure should be modified because of anything that may appear in the Report of that Commission. Noble Lords opposite might have said—"This or that might be altered when you get hold of the Poor Law Commission's Report." No such suggestion has been made, and, so far as I know, no such suggestion could be successfully made. The subjects are separate, and not inter-dependent. There is no loss of efficiency in dealing with the question of pensions separately.

It is all very well for the noble Marquess and his friends to say that this is only outdoor relief under another name. I do not believe the people of this country regard it, or will regard it, so. It may be hard sometimes to explain the difference with which people regard money they pay by way of rates from money they pay by way of taxes. But payments made from the taxes are, and will be, regarded as something entirely different from a payment out of the rates. You may philosophise about that and say it is not reasonable; but, after all, what really matters is what people believe. There is, I believe, a very great distinction drawn between receiving money which people feel comes from the State as a whole, and that which they know comes out of the pockets of their immediate neighbours whom they see every day.

Various particular criticisms have been made of different points in the Bill. It is necessary to point out that the moment you abandon the universal scheme—the original scheme of Mr. Booth—which by common consent is impossible owing to its cost, and would in many respects be undesirable even if we could afford it, you are necessarily faced with difficulties and anomalies, and your choice lies between meeting those difficulties and anomalies in the best way you can and having no pension scheme at all. I frankly admit that it is not easy to prove that a man is 70 years of age or 68, or 65, or whatever year you take. There must be some cases in which people will try to defraud you, and others in which it may be difficult to arrive at a right conclusion in the matter. But any suggestion that can be made as regards the machinery for meeting that particular difficulty and kindred difficulties, of course, will be most carefully considered.

Equally, when you come to the sliding scale it is perfectly true there is no form of sliding scale which can be made to work without a certain degree of hardship to those who are just on the edge, so to speak, of the sums named.

Then there are such difficulties as those mentioned by the noble Viscount as regards the small investor in Consols. I do not know whether there are many such people. I should have thought the cases of people who had an investment in Consols just sufficient to bring them up to the limit, and no other kind of property of any sort, and who, therefore, became subjects for old-age pensions, were exceedingly few. Then the noble Viscount also spoke of what he called relief in aid of wages—no doubt an objectionable form of public expenditure. I think he will see that that criticism has very much less force when applied at the age of 70 than it would if applied at an earlier age. The number of people over 70 who are earning anything like substantial wages is not really very great. Therefore I cannot think that that is a great difficulty.

My noble friend on the cross benches, Lord Rosebery, spoke of those who have a private pension list — landowners, employers, and others; and he seemed to fear that the effect would be to wipe out those lists altogether. Well, of course, it is difficult to prophesy in a matter of this kind, but I certainly should have thought that where the pension given by a landowner or a private employer was considerably bigger, as it would be in some cases, than the State pension, that the landowner or employer, if he thought it worth his while, might deduct from his pension the amount which the man or woman was in future going to receive from the State. That would be a perfectly legitimate and proper thing to do, supposing the employer thought it worth his while. But I do not see why he should sweep away the pension altogether if it is larger than that given by the State.

Then the noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn, spoke of what was really the very difficult question of desert. How far, he said, are you going to find out those people who in your Bill are classified as undeserving? This question of desert has always seemed to me to be one of the most difficult in connection with the question. I think it is Hume who says somewhere that, if one were to go round the world intending to give a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked he would often be embarrassed in his choice, and would find that the merits and demerits of most men and women did not amount to the value of either. That is perhaps a somewhat cynical view to take. I confess that I am not one of those who have ever believed that it is possible to exact a very close or nice test of desert in this matter of old-age pensions, and consequently we did not lay a heavy burden of proof on the proposed recipient of the pension. What we desire to do and what, I think, will in the result be done is to exclude a certain number who are notoriously unfit, but we do not want to pry meticulously into the lives of these old people, and it is quite possible that here and there some may creep in who, under a very strict interpretation of the word, might not be considered deserving. Still I think, although that may be a misfortune, it would be a less misfortune than the inquisition and hardship which would be involved by too close a system of inspection.

The noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, in what I can only call his diatribe against this Bill, spoke of it as a demoralising Bill both for the public generally and for those who were receiving the pensions. He spoke of the intense pressure that will be put on public men of all parties to do such things as to lower the age and to raise the amount. I am afraid that public men of all parties very often have considerable pressure put upon them to expend public money, and that is a pressure which they have to learn as best they can to resist. But when the noble Marquess talks of financial laxity and extravagance in this matter, did he hear the speech which was made earlier in the evening in which something was said of the cost of classification under the Poor Law? I think it was the noble Viscount Lord St. Aldwyn, who said that some of the guardians spent as much as 19s. per head upon classification, and another instance of 14s. was given.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: No.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I thought it was the noble Viscount; but I am mistaken.

A NOBLE LORD: It was the most rev. Primate.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I confess the figure is rather startling, and at the same time this humble 5s. to be distributed under strict conditions does not seem to me to offer the same temptations of laxity in public expenditure as those which may be brought about even under the existing law. I have one word to say on the financial question. The noble Marquess put a question to me which was really a rhetorical one when he said he hoped that I would explain the manner in which this money is going to be found. It must be obvious that even if I knew the financial provisions that my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer intends to insert in his next Budget I certainly should not be in a position to announce them to your Lordships to-night. There are various methods, one of which has undoubtedly been indicated by Lord Welby, by which some part of the money may be found. Whether that particular expedient, among others, will be resorted to, I am not in a position to say. Viscount St. Aldwyn said that, although he had been the author of many Budgets, he had never made proposals of this kind involving expenditure without indicating how that expenditure was to be met. No, not of this kind, but the noble Viscount was responsible—it was not his fault, but he was responsible—for very large loans, and he did not indicate how his successor was to find the money required for the interest on them.

Both my noble friend on the cross benches and the noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, spoke in a highly serious tone of the possibility that this charge might interfere with the proper cost to be set aside for the defence of the country. I ask again, is that an argument with which you can go to the country? Can you tell people to choose between the Empire on the one hand and social reform on the other? If you are going to say that the defence of the Empire is so costly, and will become so much more costly, and that there are all kinds of political contingencies of which they know nothing, so that it is impossible for us to find the money for the social reforms they demand, I ask, is that the way to spread Imperial ideas in this country? I cannot conceive a worse service to the Empire than to go to the country with empty hands and say that the shipbuilding programme, and strengthening the Army, and this, that, and the other have taken all the money and that we have nothing to expend on such objects as this. I do not believe for a moment that this scheme, or any other expenditure engaged in by the Government, will for a moment be allowed to interfere with the proper defence of the Empire. Opinion may differ on this or that point on which it is necessary to spend money for defence, but I repeat what I have often said, that we are quite as fully alive to the needs of Imperial defence as any noble Lord in this House.

I was relieved to hear, at the close of the noble Marquess's speech, that he did not intend to vote against the Bill. I am bound to say that I almost thought he ought to vote against it if he thinks it worse than a war and quite as expensive, though lacking the agreeable educative effects of a great military campaign. But apart from the noble Marquess, I am pleased to believe that both sides of the House are in favour of this principle. We have had the name of Mr. Chamberlain mentioned, and I am glad to pay my humble tribute to the part which he has taken in the promotion of this cause, which is one, I believe, he really had at heart. I should like also to mention the name of one who is not a party politician, Mr. Charles Booth. To nobody is greater credit due than to him for having brought this question before the country. My Lords, you may like or you may not like the particular provisions in this Bill; but we do make this claim that, after all the Committees and Commissions, the talk and writing, the discussions in and out of Parliament there have been on this subject, we are making a start; and I think, in consideration of that fact, we may claim, at any rate, something like a friendly reception for the Bill as a whole. There are some half a million people in this country anxiously waiting for the passing of this Bill. If they could be brought together on some great plain it would be a pathetic crowd, many of them nearly worn out with lives of long, poorly remunerated labour. They, as I say—I have heard of many individual cases—are waiting with keen interest for the passing of this Bill. My noble friend behind me has been long in public life, but I believe I am speaking his sentiments when I say that I doubt if there is any occasion on which he has made a speech or given a vote with greater pleasure than he has done one and will do the other to-night. Speaking for myself, I can say the same. I have never had the honour of being associated with any subject in public life on which it could be said that the benefit is so prompt. I am very glad to know that a very large majority of your Lordships will be able to look back, as I believe you will, with a feeling of warm satisfaction that you also have done something to support this cause.

On Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Their Lordships divided—Contents, 123; Not-Contents, 16.

CONTENTS.

Canterbury L. Abp.
Loreburn, L. (*L. Chancellor.*)

Ripon, M. (*L. Privy Seal.*)

Argyll, D.
Devonshire, D.

Ailesbury, M.
Bath, M.
Lansdowne, M.

Beauchamp, E. (*L. Steward.*)
Albemarle, E.
Aylesford, E.
Carrington, E.
Chichester, E.
Craven, E.
Crewe, E.
Cromer, E.
Denbigh, E.
Eldon, E.
Ferrers, E.
Fitzwilliam, E.
Haddington, E.
Liverpool, E.
Londesborough, E.
Lovelace, E.
Mar and Kellie, E.
Mayo, E.
Morley, E.
Nelson, E.
Onslow, E.
Orford, E.
Plymouth, E.
Portsmouth, E.
Scarbrough, E.
Shaftesbury, E.
Stanhope, E.
Vane, E. (*M. Londonderry.*)
Verulam, E.
Waldegrave, E.
Wicklow, E.

Althorpe, V. (*L. Chamberlain.*)

Churchill, V.
Esher, V.
Falkland, V.
Iveagh, V.
Portman, V.
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St. Aldwyn, V.
Selby, V.
Tredegar, V.
Wolverhampton, V.

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Southwark, L. Bp.
Wakefield, L. Bp.

Addington, L.
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Armitstead, L.
Ashbourne, L.
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Brassey, L.
Braye, L.
Burghclere, L.
Burton, L.
Colebrook, L.
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Crawshaw, L.
Curzon of Kedleston, L.
Denman, L. [*Teller.*]
Digby, L.
Douglas, L. (*E. Home.*)
Ellenborough, L.
Eversley, L.
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Farrer, L.
Fitzmaurice, L.
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Haversham, L.
Headley, L.

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Joicey, L.
Kenyon, L.
Kesteven, L.
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Kinnaird, L.
Knaresborough, L.
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Lucas, L.
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Manners, L.
Marchamley, L.
Northcliffe, L.
Nunburnholme, L.
Oriel, L. (*V. Massereene.*)
Pirrie, L.
Ponsonby, L. (*E. Bessborough.*)
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Rendel, L.
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Weardale, L.
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Abercorn, M. (*D. Abercorn.*)

Amherst, E.
Carnwath, E.
Hardwicke, E.

Mar, E.

Avebury, L.
Belhaven and Stenton, L.

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Fingall, L. (*E. Fingall.*)
Forester, L.
Mowbray, L.
Muskerry, L.
Newton, L. [*Teller.*]
Stanmore, L.
Wemyss, L. (*E. Wemyss.*) [*Teller.*]
Zouche of Haryngworth, L.

Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

TOBACCO GROWING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment, and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3^{a} To-morrow.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL.

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3^{a} To-morrow.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Second Report from the Select Committee made; to be printed; and to be considered on Thursday next. (No. 159.)

IRELAND (CONSTABULARY IN PROCLAIMED COUNTIES).

Return respecting: Laid before the House (pursuant to the Order of this day), and to be printed. (No. 160.)

EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT WATER ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Edinburgh and District Water—Was presented by the Lord Herschell (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1^{a}, and to be printed. (No. 161.)

TERRITORIAL AND RESERVE FORCES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907—Was presented by the Earl of Crewe; read 1^{a}, and to be printed. (No. 162.)

House adjourned at five minutes before Twelve o'clock, till To-morrow, Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 20th July, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, that in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.: River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, pursuant to the Order of the House of the 16th day of July, That, in the case of the following Bill, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz :—Post Office Sites Bill [Lords].

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Lords Amendments considered; One Lords Amendment amended, and agreed to; Remaining Lords' Amendments agreed to.

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords] (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Tollemache Estate Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Dover Graving Docks Bill (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed.

Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [Lords].—Read a second time and committed.

Falkirk and District Water Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]; Lanark Corporation (Extension of Boundaries, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday.

Commons Regulation (Towyn Trewan) Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers upon the Kensington and Knightsbridge Electric Lighting Company, Limited, the Notting Hill Electric Lighting Company, Limited, the Saint James' and Pall Mall Electric Light Company, Limited, the Westminster Electric Supply Corporation, Limited, and the Central Electric Supply Company, Limited, with respect to the supply of electrical energy; and for other purposes." [London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers upon certain of the London Electric Supply Companies." [London Electric Supply Bill [Lords.]

London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [Lords] London Electric Supply Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Codford and other places; London; and North Wales; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Heaton Moor; Horsham; Newport Pagnell; and Witham; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Copy presented, of Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the University to have its seat in Belfast [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Copy presented, of Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the University to have its seat in Dublin [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Copy presented, of Revised Draft of the Articles of a Charter for the College to have its seat in Dublin [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Copy presented, of Revised Draft of the Articles of a New Charter for the Constituent College at Cork [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Copy presented, of the Revised Draft of the Articles of a New Charter for the Constituent College at Galway [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY EMPLOYMENT (SAFETY APPLIANCES).

Copies presented, of Third and Fourth Reports of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to examine and, where necessary, to test appliances designed to diminish danger to men employed in Railway Service [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND CORPORATION.

Copy presented, of Fourth Report of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CARE AND CONTROL OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire concerning the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, Vols. I.–VII. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 565 (Surveys of British Africa, Ceylon, and the Federated Malay States, Annual Report of the Colonial Survey Committee, third year, to June, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Fifty-second Report of the Commissioners, with Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (SPECIAL PENSIONS).

Copy presented, of Return for the year ended 31st March, 1908, of pensions specially granted under Articles 718, 1089, and 1124 of the Pay Warrant [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOANS CONTRACTED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 14th April; *Mr. Henry Forster*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 238.]

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Statement of Particulars of Loans of which the balances outstanding are proposed to be remitted or written off (in whole or in part) from the Assets of the Local Loans Fund."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 239.]

BUILDING OPERATIONS AND ENGINEERING WORKS BILL.

Address for "Return of Memorandum explanatory of the Building Operations and Engineering Works Bill."—(*Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Outrage on Fishing Boat "Paramount."

Captain WARING (Banffshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can now state the result of the inquiries by the legal authorities in Scotland into the outrage committed in the Moray Firth on the fishing boat "Paramount" on 19th February.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) After careful inquiry, and a full consideration of all the facts, the authorities have come to the conclusion that the circumstances do not warrant criminal proceedings.

Register of Secondary School Teachers.

Sir HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether a register of teachers in secondary schools, apart from the register of certificated elementary teachers, is to be maintained; and, if not, whether the registration fees paid by the teachers whose names were on column B of the suspended register will be repaid, or what is to be done with the surplus left by the late Registration Council.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I beg to refer the hon. Member to the Parliamentary Paper which was recently circulated on the subject [Cd. 4185]. The hon. Member's suggestion for a register for secondary school teachers only, separate from the register for any other teachers, would appear to be inconsistent with the terms of Section 16 (2) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907. Pending the establishment of the council it would be premature to decide as to the disposal of the balance in hand.

Shipping Ports.

Earl of RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will give the names of the first six shipping ports of the world, judged by the tonnage of their shipping entered and cleared; and the amount of tonnage of ships entered and cleared in the case of each port for the latest year for which statistics are available.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I regret that it is not possible to give the information desired, on account of the absence of records of coasting trade in the case of some of the largest ports, including New York and Rotterdam. The following figures may, however, be of some interest to the noble Lord, but they must be read in connection with the qualifications given in the Notes. The ports, which are selected on account of their large oversea shipping trade, are given in alphabetical order—

Total net tonnage of Vessels which entered and cleared at the six principal shipping ports of the world in 1906 :—

Name of Port.	Total Tonnage entered and cleared.	
	In the Foreign Trade.	In the Coasting Trade.
Antwerp - - - - -	21,676,118	Little or none.
Hamburg - - - -	20,120,198	1,631,780 (including river traffic)
Hong Kong - - - -	19,833,666	None.
London - - - - -	19,407,942	14,716,141
New York - - - -	20,390,953	*
Rotterdam - - - -	15,372,480	No record.

* 7,136 vessels arrived coastwise in 1906, but no record of their tonnage is available, nor is any record available as to clearances.

Note.—(1) The system of computing net tonnage adopted at Antwerp differs materially from that in force at the other ports named, and results in the Antwerp figures being considerably enhanced.

(2) The above figures do not include vessels which have been entered or cleared from or to places abroad at some other port in the respective countries on the same voyage. If these duplicate entries or clearances could be included the figures for London would probably be increased to a greater extent than those for the other ports mentioned.

Classification of Post Offices.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the volume of work, as computed in units for the purpose of classifying post offices to fix the salary of the staff, comprises in each case the whole of the postal work performed in the district by the established staff at head and branch offices, that performed at unestablished post offices, and all telephone work; and whether he will publish the Regulations issued to surveyors for their guidance in obtaining the returns of work for classifying the wages of the staff.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The volume of work comprises the work of the established staff at head and branch offices and in the rural area, the work done at the head office in connection with all sub-offices, and telephone work in connection with trunk calls. It is not proposed to publish the instructions issued to surveyors in connection with this matter.

Grants to Universities.

Sir W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state what were the amounts paid out of public funds, other than out of rate, to the several Universities, as such in the United Kingdom during the last, financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The information asked for by my hon. friend is given below:—

Name of University.	Amount of Grant.			Nature of Grant.	Observations.
	£	s.	d.		
University of London -	8,000	0	0	Grant in Aid	Civil Service Estimates, Class 4, 7
Victoria University of Manchester - -	2,000	0	0	"	"
University of Birmingham	2,000	0	0	"	"
University of Wales -	4,000	0	0	"	"
University of Liverpool -	2,000	0	0	"	"
Leeds University - -	2,000	0	0	"	"
Sheffield University -	2,000	0	0	"	"
Glasgow University -	12,180	0	0*	Share of Annual Grant from Vote of Parliament	52 and 53 Vic., c. 55, s. 25. Civil Service Estimates Class 4, 7
Aberdeen University -	8,400	0	0*	"	"
Edinburgh University -	15,120	0	0*	"	"
St. Andrews University -	6,300	0	0*	"	"
University of Oxford -	500	0	0	Annual compensation. Grant for the loss of the privilege of printing and vending almanacs	44 Geo. 3, c. 98 Civil Service Estimates, Class 6, 2
University of Cambridge -	500	0	0	"	"
University of Oxford -	93	4	2	Charges transferred to the Consolidated Fund from the Land Revenues of the Crown	Annual Finance Accounts, p. 55
University of Cambridge -	97	8	2	"	"

* In addition there were paid to these Universities out of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account under the Act 55 and 56 Vic. c. 51, 2 (2), the following sums:—Glasgow University, £8,700; Aberdeen University, £6,000; Edinburgh University, £10,800; St. Andrew's University, £4,500.

The sums stated above are exclusive: (1) Of any grants received from the grant-in-aid of University colleges which are paid to certain Universities in respect of their work as colleges; (2) of sums received from the Board of Education in respect of their work as training colleges, evening schools, or technical institutions; and (3) of money received from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries for instruction in agriculture.

Pay of Enniskillen Telegraphists.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Postmaster-General whether the maximum salary at Enniskillen for telegraphists is to be reduced from 44s. per week to 40s.; whether the record of work, on which the units for classification purposes were computed, did not include 7,000 service messages, delivered registered letters, and forwarded registered letters; and whether he will order a fresh inquiry to be made as to the classification of this office.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The Returns of work upon which the present classification is based refer to the year ended 31st December, 1907, and the Return showed that the volume of work at Enniskillen only amounted to 81 units. Such a figure of volume of work only warrants Class V. scales for the indoor force, the range of which class is 120 units of work or less. Enniskillen is not regarded as an exceptionally expensive place to live in, and therefore remains in Class V. The Returns of work for Enniskillen were prepared upon the same lines as those for all other towns. Service messages are not taken into account. Delivered and forwarded registered letters are included as letters.

Forest Gate Post Office (Woodgrange Road).

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the postmaster at Forest Gate, Essex, carries on business as a wine and spirit merchant; that the residents calling at the post office for the purpose of using the telephone are sent to the postmaster's premises where liquor is sold; and whether, in view of the fact that a number of the inhabitants have conscientious objections to enter these premises, he will make arrangements for the transference of the telephone to the post office.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Presumably the office referred to by the hon. Member is that at Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate. The Post Office business is carried on in a stationer's shop. The sub-postmaster also sells wine and spirits on an off-licence in premises on the opposite side of the road and he has had the National Telephone Company's instrument installed there. I understand he is about to remove his post office and stationery business to other premises still unconnected with his wine and spirit business and that he is willing to transfer the National Telephone Company's instrument to these premises, but I cannot compel him to do so.

Departmental Committee on Half-Timers.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he has yet appointed the promised Departmental Committee on half-timers; and, if so, will he state the names of the committee and the terms of reference.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Yes, Sir, the Committee will consist of: Mr. T. McKinnon Wood, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education; Lord Clifford of Chudleigh; Lord Stanley of Alderley; Mr. Walter R. Rea, M.P.; Mr. H. M. Lindsell, C.B., a Principal Assistant Secretary of the Board of Education; Mr. G. Bellhouse, one of His Majesty's Superintending Inspectors of Factories; Mr. Joseph Cross, of Accrington, Secretary of the Northern Counties Weavers Amalgamation; Mr. Tom Garnett, of Manchester; Mr. Allen Gee, of Huddersfield, General Secretary of the General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers; Mr. Mark Oldroyd, of Dewsbury; with Mr. C. E. Sykes, an Examiner of the Board of Education, as Secretary. The terms of reference are as follows: (1) To inquire into and report upon the extent to which existing enactments relating to partial exemption form compulsory school attendance are taken advantage of in urban and rural areas in England and Wales; the occupations in which children so exempted are employed; and the effect of such occupations upon the general education and industrial training of the children; (2)

to consider the practical effects of legislation providing for the abolition or restriction of half-time employment upon industries and wage-earning, and upon educational organisation and expenditure; (3) to report whether and to what extent in view of these considerations, it is desirable to amend the law by raising the age at which partial exemption from attendance at public elementary schools is to be permitted, or by raising the minimum age for total exemption concurrently with affording facilities for partial exemption.

Scottish Local Expenditure.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the Secretary for Scotland what was the total annual expenditure by local bodies in Scotland in the year ending 1906–7, and also the total of the municipal debt for that year.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) For the information required I would refer the hon. Member to the table at page vii. of the Local Taxation (Scotland) Returns for 1905–6 (H.C. 305 (1907). The corresponding volume for 1906–7 is in course of preparation, and is not likely to be ready for some months. So far as regards the expenditure on education for 1906–7, the information will be found on page xii. of Command Paper 4112.

Postal Servants Grievances.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): To ask the Postmaster-General whether in view of the fact that the discussion on the Post Office Vote has resolved itself to a large extent into a discussion of grievances which it is quite impossible to answer in detail, and that real anomalies and hardships may run the risk of going unredressed, he will consider the advisability of appointing a Standing Committee or Commission, as in New Zealand, to which all such grievances and difficulties can be automatically referred.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Any complaints put forward by my staff will be carefully considered by me. I do not think the Postmaster-General should be relieved of this duty.

Training Colleges—Temporary Agreement.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether the temporary agreement that has recently been arrived at with reference to the conditions of entrance to denominational training colleges has been accepted by the authorities of denominational training colleges other than Church of England training colleges.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have no reason to believe that any college on the grant list fails to comply with the Training College Regulations, 1908.

Purchase of Lord Gough's Estate.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how far the negotiations for the purchase of Lord Gough's estate, near Gort, in the County Galway, have proceeded; whether the question of reserving the sporting rights by the landlord has been an impediment; and whether, in the interests of peace in the locality, he would have the Estates Commissioners to intervene in the hope of bringing about an amicable arrangement.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are not aware of any recent negotiations for the purchase of Lord Gough's estate. As regards the remainder of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to my Answer to his similar Question on 9th May, 1907. For the reasons therein stated the Commissioners do not think that any useful purpose would be served by renewing their intervention in the matter.

Recommendations of Belfast Health Commission.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what steps, if any, are being taken to put into force the recommendations of the Belfast Health Commission; and whether, in view of the time occupied by the Commission and the expense attending it, he will endeavour to see that its work shall not be without any practical result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Since the appointment of the Commission referred to the Local Government Board have had evidence of increased activity in the public health administration of Belfast, and the corporation have already taken steps to remedy some of the sanitary defects which were brought under the notice of the Commission. Many important recommendations were made by the Commission and, as I have already informed the hon. Member, the corporation must be allowed a reasonable time for action before the Local Government Board can take steps in the matter. The hon. Member may rest assured that the matter will not be lost sight of.

Reinstatement of Mrs. Moroney on Estate of Count Moore.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have several times communicated with Count Moore in connection with the reinstatement of Mrs. Moroney in her evicted farm at Kilross, and with what result; and what further steps the Commissioners contemplate taking.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that, having received no reply from the owner to their offer to make an advance for the purchase of the holding in question, they have decided to take steps to acquire it compulsorily under the provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907.

Increased cost of Irish Local Government.

MR. CULLINAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that since the passing of the Local Government Act, 1898, under which half the landlord's portion of rates was paid, the members of the Local Government Board are forcing boards of guardians to increase their staffs, to expend large sums in alterations in workhouses and hospitals, to increase salaries by imposing new duties, and generally to increase the burden on the ratepayer; whether under the Land Purchase Acts the occupier has to bear the entire burden of increased rates; and whether, as the entire amount of the said increase has to be borne by local contribution, he will see his way to having half the amount contributed, as was the practice prior to the passing of the Local Government Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The general policy of the Local Government Board is quite the opposite of that suggested in the Question. In exceptional cases, in which the existing staff was found to be inadequate to meet the requirements of the sick poor, the action of the Local Government Board may have involved increased expenditure by local authorities, but the great majority of the complaints made against the Board are that they refuse to sanction increased expenditure upon salaries and other matters. The Land Purchase Acts have not affected the incidence of the rates. The hon. Member should bear in mind that a reversion to the system which existed prior to 1898 would involve the withdrawal from Ireland of the Agricultural Grant of over £700,000 a year.

Orange Disturbances at Portadown.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that, on Saturday night, the 11th instant, Orange arches were put across William Street or Chapel Street, Portadown, where the Catholic Church and the priests' house are situated, a few yards from the church, to the annoyance of Catholics coming to church on Sunday, although nothing of the kind has been seen in the street for years; that there was yelling and horseplay on the night of the 11th and up till two o'clock the following morning opposite the church and presbytery; and that on Sunday night the mob increased in numbers and violence, cursing the Pope and thumping the doors of the Catholic houses, and breaking in the door of a Catholic widow's house to the terror of the woman and her daughter; whether any police were present on the occasion; will he say whether any arrests were made or any report furnished to the authorities, and whether but for the forbearance of the Catholics a serious riot might have taken place; whether he is also aware that in another Catholic quarter, namely, Marlay Street, on Sunday night, the 12th instant similar misconduct, accompanied with breaking of windows and stone throwing, took place without any provocation or retaliation on the part of the Catholics; whether he will explain why no policemen were to be found in the vicinity of these occurrences; and whether he will direct that the police shall take action to prevent the repetition of such occurences in future, and especially of the erection of Orange arches beside the Catholic Church or in Catholic quarters.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The police authorities inform me that on the night of the 11th instant an Orange arch was erected in William Street, Portadown, in which street the Catholic Church and the priests' house are situated. The majority of the residents in that street are Protestants, and the part of the street where the arch was put up is exclusively occupied by Protestants; and it has been the usual custom to put an arch there. Police patrols were specially placed in the street on the 11th, 12th, and 13th instant. No such conduct as is referred to in the Question came under their notice, nor has any complaint of such conduct been received. It is the fact that on the night of the 12th a few panes of glass of the value of 1s. 6d. were broken in Marley Street, a Catholic quarter, but the police were unable to determine whether this incident was of a party character. No Orange arches were erected in Catholic quarters, and no complaint has been received heretofore respecting the arch usually erected in William Street. The police take all possible measures for preserving the peace on the occasion of these party celebrations, and in this case they appear to have done so with considerable success.

Purchase of Untenanted Land—Lack of Funds for Improvement.

MR. KAVANAGH (Carlow): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Congested Districts Board was authorised last April to purchase £420,000 worth of tenanted land, and that the Board is unable to carry out the purchase of these estates on account of the lack of funds to make improvements on them; and, seeing that a serious situation has arisen on these estates on account of the sales not being carried through, whether he will advise that the Board should be provided with the necessary increase to its funds to enable it to complete the purchase of, and carry out the improvements on, these estates which have been already authorised by the Treasury

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is the fact that in April last the Congested Districts Board decided to negotiate for the purchase of eight estates at an estimated cost of about £420,000. The Board did not at once enter upon negotiations for the purchase of these estates, but at their meeting on the 10th instant it was decided to go on with the matter, and the negotiations for purchase will now proceed. Such negotiations in the case of large estates necessarily take time, and it cannot be said that a serious situation has arisen on these estates because the sales have not been carried through. There is no difficulty about the provision of funds for the purchase of estates by means of advances from the Land Commission, and as regards the improvement of the eight estates particularly referred to no immediate difficulty can arise seeing that, even under the most expeditious proceedings a considerable time must elapse before the lands are vested in the Board.

Extra Police at Ballinaglera.

MR. F. MEEHAN (Leitrim, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of extra police stationed in the district of Ballinaglera, County Leitrim, to the fact that all causes of disturbance have been removed, the land question in that locality practically settled, and the district perfectly peaceable, he would give instructions to have all extra police withdrawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Five extra policemen are stationed in the district referred to. The police authorities inform me that there has been an improvement in the state of the district, but that it would be premature to reduce the strength of the police at present. The force will be reduced as soon as the circumstances warrant the adoption of that course.

Absconding Members of Dublin Metropolitan Police.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether towards the end of last year a pay-sergeant in the D Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police absconded with a considerable sum of public money; if a staff-sergeant in the same division also absconded, owing large sums to various traders for goods supplied to the mess; whether any inquiry was held, and with what result, as to the responsibility of Superintendent Dunne for the conduct of the sergeants, both of whom were under his control; if the superintendent was called upon to make good a portion of the money, and how much; and whether, in the event of the Government forcing on the people of Dublin the proposed Commission of Inquiry, he will enlarge its scope so as to make it possible to have the administration of the D Division by Superintendent Dunne thoroughly investigated.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) A pay-sergeant of the D Division of the Dublin police absconded last year with about £100 of public money. A staff-sergeant of the same division also absconded, but the Chief Commissioner is not aware of any outstanding liabilities for goods supplied to the mess. Superintendent Dunne, who is in charge of the finances of the division, provisionally made good the deficit. The matter was subsequently investigated by the Chief Commissioner, upon whose recommendation the Treasury relieved the superintendent from liability for the loss due to the fraud of his subordinate. I am not aware of any necessity for further investigating the matter.

Home Rule for Ireland.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland having regard to the Resolution passed by this House that the grant ing to the Irish people of legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs is vital to the interests of Ireland, and to the declaration of the Prime Minister that the question of Home Rule for Ireland would be an issue at the next general election, he will consider the advisability of not proceeding with the appointment of the proposed Dublin Metropolitan Police Commission but leave all questions affecting that force to be dealt with by an Irish legislative assembly.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) When undertaking to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the cost of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, I was under the impression that there was a general wish for the appointment of such a Commission. As I have already informed the hon. Member, there has been considerable discussion upon the terms of reference, which have not yet been settled. I am not at present aware of any reason why the proposal to appoint a Commission should be abandoned.

Distribution of Irish Primary Education Supplementary Grant.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when he will be in a position to state the altered method on which the Supplementary Grant for primary education will be distributed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I hope to be able to make a statement on this subject in the course of a week, but cannot at present name a precise date.

Extra Police at Cashel.

MR. CONDON (Tipperary, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether over 200 police were imported into Cashel on 15th July in connection with a small seizure for rent; whether County Inspector Rogers refused to allow the inhabitants to pass through the streets, though requested to do so by the priest and representative men of the district, including the chairman of the urban council; whether the attitude of the county inspector was likely to lead to a breach of the peace on the occasion; and whether the urban district of Cashel will have to pay for the importation of those police.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) On 15th July a force of 100 police under County Inspector Rogers was assembled in Cashel to preserve the peace in connection with a sheriff's sale at which disturbance was anticipated. The county inspector refused to allow a crowd of 500 persons, accompanied by three bands, to march past the place of sale, but when the bandsmen put up their instruments he offered no opposition to their free passage. A Catholic clergyman and the chairman of the town commissioners, who accompained the crowd, protested against the action of the county inspector. It appears to have been the object of the crowd and bands to interfere with the sale, and the inspector general is satisfied that the county inspector acted properly. Fifty of the extra police were brought from an adjoining county, and the county at large will have to bear the charge in respect of that number.

Woolwich Arsenal—Number of Employees.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of men employed at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, on 31st December, 1905, how many on 31st October, 1906, how many on 30th September, 1907, and at the present time.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The figures are as follows:—

30th December, 1905	14,496
27th October, 1906	13,543
28th September, 1907	11,757
11th July, 1908	11,471

Volunteer Officers' Decoration.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Volunteer decoration will in future be conferred upon officers who have served sixteen years instead of twenty years, as in the case of the long-service medal.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply is in the negative.

Mr. Wade of Richmond (Yorks) and the Fair Wage Clause.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Mr. Wade, of Richmond, Yorkshire, who is executing work for his Department at Tynemouth Barracks, at Clifford's Fort, North Shields, at Frenchman's Battery, South Shields, and at Whitley Bay rifle range, is paying the joiners employed on this work 7d. and 7½d. per hour, the standard wage of joiners in the district being 9½d. per hour; and whether he will take steps to compel this contractor to pay his employees the standard wage.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The case is being inquired into, but the facts have not yet been fully ascertained.

Government Servants and Territorial Camps.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a number of Government employees cannot obtain leave to attend camp except by giving up their only annual holiday, by surrendering to a substitute who does their civil work their civil pay during the period of camp, a twenty-fifth of their income, receiving in its stead their military pay of 1s. a day, or by remaining in their offices to work overtime day after day until they have made up the hours which they have made fitting themselves for the defence of their country; and whether in view of his appeal to private employers of labour to grant fifteen days special leave to their employees, he proposes to take any action to secure similar facilities for Civil servants.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I am disposed to think that the difficulties experienced by Civil servants in attending the camp trainings are not so great as are suggested in the hon. Member's Question; but if will submit to me any actual cases of hardship within his knowledge I will inquire into them.

Revenue of Nassau, West Indies.

MR. GLENDINNING (Antrim, N.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the amount of revenue Inagua Island, Bahamas, West Indies, contributes to Nassau, and what is Nassau's outlay in Inagua; if he is aware that a private individual has recently repaired the Government wharf at Matthewtown, Nassau, having refused to disburse the amount spent in repairs; and, if so, is there any means of preventing Nassau from using revenue for pleasure resorts and auto roads for the use of visitors.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The Secretary of State is unable to supply information on the points referred to, and before making inquiry of the Governor would be glad of a clearer statement of the particulars desired. I presume that my hon. friend in speaking of Nassau, refers to the central government of the Bahamas, of which Nassau is the capital.

Canada and the Defence of the Empire.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state what sum in gross or per head the Dominion of Canada pays directly towards the defence of the Empire (not including any local payments for land or lake police).

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The expenditure of Canada on defence, according to the latest completed Returns for the year ending 31st March, 1907, was at the rate of £1,333,000 a year, or about 4s. 6d. per head of the population, while the estimated expenditure for 1907–8 was £1,475,800, or about 5s. per head of the population.

Importation of Canadian Live Cattle.

MR. CATHCART WASON: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Canadian Government had made representation to the British Government with reference to free importation of live cattle; and, if so, if he will lay such representation upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) No representation on this subject has been received from the Canadian Government since the matter was discussed at the Colonial Conference of last year. After the Conference a despatch was sent to the Governor-General conveying the regret of His Majesty's Government that, after the fullest consideration, they were unable to propose to Parliament any amendment of the existing law.

Sale of Liquor to Natives at Indian Railway Stations.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that trade in spirits with the natives is carried on at railway stations on the Government railways in Southern Nigeria; and whether he will take steps to put an end to this practice.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) I am not aware that trade in spirits is carried on at the railway stations, but inquiry will be made of the Governor on the subject.

Rates for Carriage of Spirits from Lagos to Abeokuta.

MR. GULLAND: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what are the rates for the carriage of spirits to Abeokuta and Ibadan by rail from Lagos; and how these compare with the rates for kerosene, methylated spirits, and other such commodities.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The rate for the carriage of trade spirits is 16s. a ton to Abeokuta, up to which place the railway is in competition with canoe transport on the river, and 52s. a ton to Ibadan; the rates for kerosene and methylated spirits are 51s. 2d. a ton to Abeokuta and 102s. 4d. a ton to Ibadan. There is also a terminal charge of 2s. 6d. a ton, which corresponds to a wharfage due at Iddo, the terminus of the line, in the case of all three commodities. The Governor has, however, under consideration a proposal to reduce the rates in Class 3, in which kerosene and methylated spirits are at present included.

Imports of Spirits into Southern Nigeria.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state the quantity and value of spirits imported into Southern Nigeria during each of the last ten years; the value of other commodities imported; and the proportion of spirits to the total imports (excluding goods for Government services) in each such year.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The complete figures for 1907 are not yet available. The figures for earlier years will be found in the "Statistical Abstract for the several British Colonies, Possessions, and Protectorates," published by the Board of Trade.

Sale of Spirits to African Natives.

MR. LEIF JONES: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in which of the British Possessions in Africa the sale of spirits to natives is prohibited; and what are the import duties in those Colonies where the sale is not prohibited.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The sale of spirits to natives is prohibited in the northern territories of the Gold Coast and Northern Nigeria. It is also prohibited in British Somaliland, the British East Africa Protectorate, Uganda, Nyasaland, and Rhodesia. The import duties in the West African Colonies where the sale is not prohibited are as follows:—

	For spirits of "proof" strength, per imperial gallon.	
	s.	d.
Gambia - - - - -	4	6
Sierra Leone - - - -	4	6
Gold Coast (West of the Volta) - - - - -	5	6
Gold Coast (East of the Volta) - - - - -	4	3
Southern Nigeria - - -	4	6

In all the countries of the South African Customs Union, viz., Cape, Natal, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, Southern Rhodesia, Basutoland, Swaziland, and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, more or less stringent prohibition of sale to natives exists. The duty on imported spirits under the Customs Union of 1906 is on liqueurs, cordials, and mixed spirits, exceeding 3 per cent. of proof spirit, per imperial gallon £1, and on other sorts, exceeding 3 per cent. of proof spirit, per imperial proof gallon 19s.

Imports into British African Colonies.

MR. LEIF JONES: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state the value of imports into each of the British Colonies of Central Africa last year, showing in each case how much of this value was made up by spirits and how much by other commodities.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) I regret to say that the figures for last year are not yet available.

Gin and Rum as Medium of Exchange in Southern Nigeria.

MR. HOWARD (Cumberland, Eskdale): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that trade gin and rum are freely used as a medium of exchange in the Delta districts of Southern Nigeria; and what steps the Government are prepared to take to put an end to this mischievous practice.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) I am aware that in certain districts of Southern Nigeria liquor, as well as many other articles, is used as a medium of exchange where coin does not circulate freely. Every effort is being made by the Government to encourage the use of currency, but to induce the native to abandon his old methods of exchange can only be achieved by degrees. It must be remembered that the native population is very large and that many are in a backward stage of civilisation, while the European residents are few in number and scattered over a large territory.

Sale of Spirits to Natives—Policy of Foreign Powers.

MR. LEIF JONES: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what is the policy of Foreign European powers in regard to the sale of spirits to natives in their African possessions.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The policy of Foreign European Powers in regard to the sale of spirits to natives in their African possessions is indicated in Articles XC. to XCV. of the General Act of Brussels of 2nd July, 1890, the Convention respecting the Liquor Traffic in Africa of 8th June, 1899, and the Convention respecting Liquors in Africa of 3rd November, 1906. I can add nothing to the information contained in these Papers, which have all been presented to Parliament.

Children Tried under Paragraph (b) Section 15 Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will say how many children were tried under Paragraph (*b*) of the proviso to Section 15 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904, and how many were convicted thereunder, in 1905, 1906, and 1907 respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) There was no such case in the year 1907. I cannot speak with certainty of the years 1905 and 1906, but I think it is extremely unlikely that any such case occurred.

Civil Service Appointment—Nomination and Competition.

SIR G. KEKEWICH (Exeter): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state in what Departments of the Civil Service appointments are made on the nomination of the head of the Department or that of some other person instead of by open competitive examination; what appointments have been so made in each of the years 1900 to 1907; what were the posts to which such appointments were made and the salaries attaching thereto, and the rank and salaries at the present time of the persons so appointed; and will he also state what methods of selection are employed.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The details as regards appointments filled by nomination followed by qualifying examination are too long to be given in an Answer to a Question, but they will all be found set out in the rules and regulations respecting examinations for the Home Civil Service, etc., published by the Civil Service Commissioners. The preparation of a Return of all such appointments made from to 1900 to 1907, and of the rank and salaries at the present time of the persons so appointed, would necessitate the collection of information from a number of Departments, and its value would not, in my opinion, be commensurate with the labour involved. I have no information as to the methods of selection employed.

Age for Retirement of the Ordnance Survey Staff.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can see his way to extend the age limit for retirement for workers not on the pensionable establishment of the Ordnance Survey in order that on retirement they would come within the scope of the Old-Age Pension Act.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The reply is in the negative. The arrangement suggested could not be adopted without considerable loss of efficiency and an increase of cost.

Extension of Deer Forest Areas.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will consider the expediency of introducing legislation such as will enable the Crofter's Commission to check the further extension of the deer forest area.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am not able to add anything now to the answers I have given as to the attitude of the Government in regard to legislation affecting the occupation of land in Scotland.

Imperial and Local Taxation.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to a resolution of the Montgomery County Council urging upon His Majesty's Government that services of a national character should be paid for very largely out of national funds and less out of local rates, as recommended by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in 1901; and whether he proposes to afford local bodies any relief in this respect.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The whole questions of the relations between Imperial and local taxation is under the consideration of the Government, but I am not in a position to make any statement on the subject at present.

Memorial of Mr. C. W. Allan, Indian Forest Service.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for

India whether the Secretary of State's attention has been directed to the Memorial addressed to him by Mr. C. W. Allan, an extra Deputy-Conservator of forests in the Burma provincial service; whether Mr. Allan, after passing through the college at Dehra Dun, joined the Indian Forest Service on 1st February, 1887, at a time when it was provided by Section 21 of the then Forest Department Code that, after five years approved service as Sub-Assisant Conservator of Forests, he would be drafted into the upper controlling staff; whether he is aware that in 1891 the Government issued a new Forest Department reorganisation scheme debarring all officers thenceforward appointed in India from promotion to the upper controlling staff, and that, having done four years of admittedly approved service, the new scheme was by *ex post facto* ruling applied to Mr. Allan's case; whether he is aware that recently the Secretary of State for India has sanctioned the transfer of Mr. Shrish Chandra Chakrabatti from the provincial to the Imperial engineering service on the ground that, as he had actually entered the Sibpur Engineering College before the issue of the orders closing the Imperial service to students of Indian engineering colleges, he had an equitable right to an appointment in the Imperial service; and will he state on what ground, in an analogous case, Mr. Allan has been refused similar treatment; and whether the Government of India will be directed to remedy the grievance from which Mr. Allan is suffering.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Mr. Allan's Memorial has been received from India, and is now under the consideration of the Secretary of State in Council. The Secretary of State is not in a position at present to make a statement regarding it.

Appointment of Nurses at Tipperary.

MR. CULLINAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Local Government Board is attempting to force the Tipperary Board of Guardians to appoint several trained nurses in the rural districts of the union; and if he can state from what source the salaries of those nurses, if appointed, is to come.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The medical officers of certain dispensary districts in the Tipperary Union have represented to the Local Government Board's medical inspector that midwives are required in those districts. The Local Government Board have called the attention of the guardians to the necessity for making adequate provision for the skilled treatment of maternity cases among the poor, but no definite decision in the matter has yet been arrived at. The salaries of such midwives are borne by the union.

Erection of Medical Officer's Residence at Emly.

MR. CULLINAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Tipperary Board of Guardians are unable to secure a contractor to erect a medical officer's residence and dispensary house at Emly for the amount sanctioned by the Local Government Board; that the guardians' engineer undertakes to complete the work by direct labour for the amount sanctioned, but the Local Government Board will not consent; and whether he will get the latter to allow the guardians to have the building proceeded with in the manner they consider cheapest and best.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have already intimated to the guardians that they will raise no objection to the execution by direct labour of the works in question, seeing that the guardians have made four unsuccessful attempts to obtain a contractor.

Carrick National Schools.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what educational advantages the Commissioners of National Education anticipate from the appointment of a female assistant to a school, Roll 1,950, Circuit 9, Section A.; whether he can state how many girls' schools in the same circuit are being more efficiently conducted than the school referred to; whether, if the boys' school be made into a girls' school and to the present girls' school a class room were built and the boys transferred school, Roll No. 2,997, would there be space in school, Roll 1,950 for the present, attendance of girls plus the infant boys; whether the withdrawal of the infant boys would mean the probable dismissal of the assistant; whether such contingency constitutes an exemption from Rule 127 (*b*); whether in enforcing this rule the Commissioners take into account the qualifications and ability of the teaching staff; and whether, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, the Commissioners will re-consider their decision.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The manager of the Carrick National Schools for boys and girls respectively has applied to the Commissioners of National Education for a grant towards the cost of the enlargement of the present schools, which are contained in the same building. The Commissioners pointed out to him that before they could sanction a grant it was necessary that provision should be made for the transfer to the girls' school of the infant boys at present in the boys' school. The Commissioners further stated that if the manager objected to this condition they might make a grant if he should undertake, on the occurrence of a vacancy, to appoint an assistant mistress to the boys' school to look after the infant boys. The Commissioners are satisfied that infant boys are better instructed and cared for by mistresses than by masters. They could not say without prolonged inquiry how many girls' schools in the same circuit are more efficiently conducted. The existing boys' school would afford sufficient accommodation for all the girls and infant boys. The withdrawal of the infant boys from the present boys' school would make precarious the position of the assistant in that school, and in such circumstances Rule 127 (*b*) is not enforced. Before enforcing that rule in any case the Commissioners consider all the circumstances of the school and its staff. The Commissioners see no grounds for varying the modified conditions in which they will consider an application for a grant-in-aid, as already notified to the manager.

Salaries of Irish National School Teachers.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, by the operation of the rules of the National Board which came into force in 1900, most first-class teachers in charge of schools with an average of seventy or over have benefited to the extent of £24 a year, inasmuch as they had reached their maximum salary under the old rules and are eligible for increments under the new; whether he is aware that a teacher appointed for the first time since 1900 to a similar school is in receipt of a salary at least £50 per year less than that to which he would have been entitled under the old rules; and, if so, whether he will differentiate between those two classes of teachers in allocating the Supplementary Estimate for Irish primary education.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that first-class teachers and most other teachers who were in the service prior to 1900 have benefited by the new scale of incomes introduced in that year, but the amount of the benefit has varied with the circumstances of each teacher. The income of a teacher appointed under the old rules depended on a variety of incidental circumstances, but under the existing rules most of these circumstances are absent and incomes are less liable to fluctuation. It would, in the Commissioners' opinion, be impossible to make any comparison, which would be of general application, between the incomes of any class of teachers under the new and old regulations. It is not intended to differentiate between the two classes of teachers mentioned in allocating the supplementary grant.

Purchase of the Tulrahan Grazing Farm.

MR. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether the Congested Districts Board were quite willing to purchase the Tulrahan grazing farm, situate in the County of Mayo, when the owner decided on selling it; whether terms of sale and purchase were discussed by the owner and the chief land inspector of the Board, Mr. Doran; if he will state why the Board was unable to acquire the property; and whether any arrangement was entered into between the chief land inspector of the Board and the person who has now been declared the purchaser, whereby the latter will sell to the Board at any time the Board expresses its willingness to buy.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Congested Districts Board were willing to purchase the farm of Tulrahan, and terms were discussed with the Board's inspector, but the owner preferred to deal with the present purchaser, who has since arranged to sell to the Board at the price which he himself paid.

Irish Poor Law Administration.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps have yet been taken to prepare a scheme of Poor Law reform on the lines laid down in the Vice-Regal Commission Report; if not, whether he will see that in the preparation of that scheme the opinion of persons who have practical experience of the working of the Irish Poor Laws and of Poor Law administration will be invited; and whether he will urge the immediate preparation of such a scheme.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are at present engaged in shaping the general outlines of a scheme; but until the Report of the Royal Commission is before them, and the question of the future areas of rating is definitely determined, it will not be possible to fill in the details of any scheme with sufficient completeness to enable them to submit it to the local authorities.

Labourers' Cottages for Castlereagh.

MR. J. DEVLIN. To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the statements made at the Local Government Board inquiry held at the Belfast Workhouse on the 15th instant, to consider the scheme for the erection of labourers' cottages in the Castlereagh rural district; whether there are any representatives of the labourers on the district council; whether Captain Maude, the agent for the Marquess of Downshire, was included in the sites committee by resolution of the council; whether it was proposed that only half an acre of land be given to each applicant, although the Act of Parliament provides that every applicant is entitled to an acre; whether representations were made by the labourers of the need for cottages in 1904, and the council passed a resolution that no cottages were needed; whether Colonel M'Cance, J.P., the chairman of the council, admitted that the men were of decent character, but said that half an acre each was sufficient for them; and whether he will advise the Local Government Board to take special care that these labourers are not deprived of their legal rights.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The scheme of the rural district council proposed to provide twenty-two labourers' cottages with garden allotments of a quarter of an acre in each case. The Local Government Board are not aware whether there are any representatives of the labourers on the district council, but they are aware that Captain Maude was a member of the Sites Committee. The Labourers Acts do not make it mandatory on the local authority to provide the maximum allotment of a statute acre. It is the fact that representations for cottages were made by the labourers in 1904, and that the council passed a resolution to the effect stated. The Local Government Board's inspector would not be warranted in refusing to confirm a scheme because the allotment attached to each cottage is less than an acre. The Local Government Board understand that the sites are more valuable than ordinary agricultural holdings, and that some of them are close to the city boundary on land which is of a comparatively high price.

Grants to Irish Workhouse Teachers.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the distribution of the grant to National teachers in Ireland, he will make provision for increases to the workhouse teachers in Irish unions, as such teachers are under the National Board rules and their salaries are paid by Government grants, and it is well known that in many cases there never has been any improvement in their positions in the way of salaries.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer to the Answer which I gave to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for North Wexford on 9th July.

Royal Commission on Poor Law—Grants for Preparing Returns.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in a number of Irish unions the boards of guardians have voted some of their officers many grants for performing extra duties in the way of preparing Returns for the Royal Commission on Poor Laws; whether the Local Government Board for Ireland have withheld sanction to the payment of the sums voted, notwithstanding the fact that in a number of cases the Returns so prepared are completed; and whether he will see his way to have the Local Government Board's sanction given in the cases in which the Returns have been found to be complete.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Returns in question are in course of examination by the Local Government Board, and as soon as this work has been completed the Board will consider the proposals of the guardians. The examination has been somewhat retarded by reason of the imperfect manner in which many of the Returns were prepared. The various proposals of the guardians are being formulated in order that the Board may arrange a scale of payments under which the different classes of officers concerned will be equitably remunerated.

The Imprisoned Suffragists.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: To ask the Prime Minister if, in view of the statement that the imprisoned Suffragettes are more or less associated with criminals, and that their methods have been encouraged by references to former riots and breaking park railings by a Cabinet Minister, he will see that the ladies shall not associate with or be treated as ordinary criminals.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) This is a Question that should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

Legislation affecting the Occupation of Land in Scotland.

Mr. WEIR: To ask the Prime Minister having regard to the fact that Mr. Hugh Robertson occupied the farm of Milton of Pitcastle, in the parish of Logierait, Perthshire, for a period of twenty-four years, and was evicted because he asked for £1 reduction in his rent as compensation for some acres taken off the farm for feuing purposes, will he state whether the Government propose to introduce legislation to meet cases of this kind.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The case referred to by my hon. friend has been brought unofficially to my notice, but I am not able to add to the Answers I have given as to the attitude of the Government in regard to legislation affecting the occupation of land in Scotland.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Defence of Seaport Towns.

Mr. STANIER (Shropshire, Newport): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty will the Admiralty furnish a Return showing the state of the defences of seaport towns, not including naval bases.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): It would be contrary to the interests of the public service to publish such a Return.

British Granite for Rosyth.

Mr. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in inviting tenders for work in connection with the establishment of a naval base at Rosyth, he will take into consideration the advisability of stipulating that British granite only shall be used.

Mr. McKENNA: I have arranged that the firms invited to tender shall be asked to submit alternative prices for British and foreign stone.

Naval Protection of Trade Routes.

Mr. STANIER: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, with reference to the Report of the Treasury

Committee upon the subject of national insurance of merchant shipping, and to its conclusion that the latter must depend for protection exclusively on the Navy, and in view of the fact that we have only sixty-seven unarmoured cruisers, most, if not all, of which would be required for service with our battle Fleets, will he say how do the Government propose to maintain the security of our trade routes in time of war, and how many cruisers do they expect to have at liberty for that purpose.

MR. MCKENNA: The hon. Member will, I am sure, understand that it is not in the public interests that information should be given which would disclose the probable strategical disposition of our ships in war time.

Training of Naval Officers.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the class which provides officers for the Navy is less than one-twentieth part of the total population, and that those families which formerly supplied the engineer officers are now totally debarred from doing so because of their inability to pay the cost of the training and maintenance of their sons at Osborne and Dartmouth; and will he consider the advisability of reducing the charges made to the parents and guardians of naval cadets in order to put a stop to this state of affairs.

MR. MCKENNA: I am not aware of the exact proportion; and an examination of the parentage of the cadets now at Keyham, and also at the Osborne and Dartmouth colleges, shows that the second of my hon. friend's statements is far from correct. With regard to the cost to the parents of education at Osborne and Dartmouth, as I explained in a recent debate, when the early age of entry is taken into account, there is not a very great disparity between the charges which the parents in general have to bear under the present and under former systems.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of reducing the charges?

MR. MCKENNA: I think it has been stated in the House that the amount of the charges made on the parents is not an Admiralty matter.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON: Then who is responsible?

MR. MCKENNA: It is a matter for the whole Government, I take it.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Will the First Lord, as representing what is supposed to be a democratic Government, initiate a system similar to that in the United States of America, so that once a boy gets in his parents should be freed from all charges?

MR. MCKENNA: My hon. friend appears to have overlooked the fact that in the United States secondary education of all kinds is free. In this country it is not.

Naval Officers and Company Directorships.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that Admiral Lord Charles Beresford is chairman of John Henry Andrew and Company, Limited, Toledo Steel Works, Sheffield; whether it is permitted by the Admiralty that naval officers on full pay can engage in any form of business whatever; and will he state whether the firm above mentioned have during the last five years received any contracts from the Admiralty, and, if so, the value of such contracts in each of the five years respectively.

MR. MCKENNA: The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative according to the latest published information. Naval officers are not forbidden by the King's Regulations to engage in business, but are forbidden to have any pecuniary interest or personal advantage in contracts for the supply of goods to the naval service. There is no record of any contract having been placed by the Admiralty with this firm during the last five years.

MR. H. C. LEA: Arising out of that astonishing reply, Sir——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is not entitled to take the opportunity of Questions to make remarks on the replies given. If the hon. Member has another Question to put, let him put it courteously.

MR. H. C. LEA: In deference to your remarks, Sir, I may say that the reason why I said the reply was astonishing was that I understood that no officer or man on full pay in the British Navy——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now arguing. He had better put down his Question.

Royal Marine Pensioners.

MR. JENKINS (Chatham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, what number of petty officers and men from the Royal Navy and the number of non-commissioned officers from the Royal Marines are in receipt of pensions and the total amount of those pensions for the years 1908, 1898, and 1888; and what number of commissioned officers from the Royal Navy and Marines are in receipt of pensions, and the total amount of those pensions for the years 1908, 1898, and 1888.

MR. McKENNA: Statement showing the number of commissioned officers in receipt of retired pay, warrant and subordinate officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers and men in receipt of pensions, together with the total amounts relative to each class, for the years 1888, 1898, and 1908:—

	1888.		1898.		1908.	
	Nos.	Amount.	Nos.	Amount.	Nos.	Amount.
Commissioned officers, Royal Navy ... Commissioned officers, Royal Marines ...	2,304	655,769	2,253	676,273	2,404	£ 771,922
Commissioned warrant officers	226	26,930	285	34,681	286	35,720
Subordinate and warrant officers ...	718	61,619	719	59,352	916	70,713
Petty officers and Seamen, Royal Navy ...	18,379	632,200 (Naval).	21.814	786,000 (Naval).	26,432	978,600 (Naval).
Non-commissioned officers and men, Royal Marines ...	7,573	100,200 (Greenwich Hospital).	7,762	122,100 (Greenwich Hospital).	8,140	123,900 (Greenwich Hospital).

The Special Reserve.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the present strength of the Infantry of the Special Reserve in non-commissioned officers and men; and how many of the men are under twenty years of age.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington) On the 1st July the strength of the non-commissioned officers and men of the Infantry Special Reserve (excluding the Permanent Establishment) was 25,528. No statistics as regards the ages are at present available in the War Office.

MR. ASHLEY: Then are we to understand that of the 25,528 men the right hon. Gentleman does not know how many are fit for service abroad?

MR. HALDANE: We shall have the information in due course.

MR. ASHLEY: What steps are you taking to ascertain it?

MR. HALDANE: We shall have the ages presently.

National Defence.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that military reconnaissances of the United Kingdom were stopped two years ago, as it was alleged that they were not suitable for the purposes for which they were intended, he will state what steps are being taken to make a careful survey of the ground by those charged with the defence of particular parts of the country.

MR. HALDANE: Reconnaissances are being carried out locally under the direction of General Officers Commanding-in-Chief and commanders of coast defences who are charged with the defence of their commands in time of war. Strategic reconnaissances required in connection with the concentration and deployment of larger forces have been and will continue to be undertaken by the General Staff.

MR. ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of allowing officers of the Territorial Force to assist in these reconnaissances?

MR. HALDANE: They may take part in the staff rides.

Officers' Bungalows in South Africa.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is now able to state what reduction in rent, if any, he can grant to officers who are paying rent for bungalows in South Africa far in excess of their present value, rents calculated on the inflated prices charged when they were built, and which do not take into account their depreciation since that date.

MR. HALDANE: It is hoped that the War Department will be able to render some assistance to officers renting bungalows. As soon as a decision has been reached notification will be sent to South Africa.

Horses for Army Purposes.

SIR SAMUEL SCOTT (Marylebone, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many of the County Associations have agreed to carry out an inquiry as to the number of horses suitable for Army purposes within their boundaries; whether it is to be left to the County Associations to discriminate between those horses which are suitable for Army purposes and those which are not; and whether the War Office proposes to appoint officers to assist them in their task.

MR. HALDANE: If the hon. Baronet will kindly refer to Section 2 of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act he will find that the matter referred to in the first part of the Question are part of the duties of the Association; no question of agreement can therefore arise. The Deputy Assistant Directors of Remounts have been placed at the service of the Associations to assist them in discriminating between those horses which are suitable for Army purposes and those which are not. It is not proposed to appoint any other officers to assist the Associations.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): How many Associations have acted on the instructions?

MR. HALDANE: I have no knowledge.

EARL WINTERTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain before this period of the session closes?

MR. HALDANE: Perhaps the noble Lord will put down a Question.

Census of Horses.

SIR SAMUEL SCOTT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state by what method, other than by a complete census of all horses, County Associations will be able to supply satisfactory information respecting the number of horses suitable for Army purposes within their boundaries; whether the cost of making such a census will be defrayed out of Army funds, whether it will be a charge upon the limited funds already at the disposal of County Associations, or whether the Government expect expenses of travelling and inspection of horses to be paid out of the private purse of the person who agrees to carry out these duties.

MR. HALDANE: It is expected that the arrangements alluded to in the reply to the previous Questions will secure the required information. The question of making a special grant to the Associations in respect of the cost of obtaining this information is under consideration.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): Why cannot the Board of Agriculture do its own work and obtain a census of horses in the same way as it does of beasts, sheep and pigs, and other agricultural produce?

MR. HALDANE: The right hon. Gentleman might address that Question to the Board of Agriculture. I can only say that if we can assist in collating this information, which is very important to us, we shall only be too glad to do so.

Shoeburyness Artillery Ranges.

SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what title the owners of the 1,760 acres of foreshore purchased by the Crown for artillery practice at Shoeburyness set up against the Crown: whether those owners denied the right of the Crown to fire over or use that part of the foreshore; and whether, and what, legal proceedings were taken to assert the rights of the Crown.

MR. HALDANE: The title rests on a grant to John de Burgh, confirmed by Edward II. In 1900 the owners applied for an injunction restraining the War Department from firing over or using this foreshore. No legal proceedings were taken to assert the rights of the Crown. The Law Officers of the Crown advised the Crown that the action should not be allowed to come to trial, but should be settled on the best terms.

SIR J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the War Office has agreed to pay £5,500 for an estate of 890 acres of foreshore at Shoeburyness, and to whom is the payment to be made; whether the War Department had rented that estate for above forty years from the Office of Woods, as representing the Crown, and used it in whole or part for artillery practice and other military objects; whether, during that period, any private persons alleged ownership in denial of the rights of the Crown to fire over these lands; and whether the price of £5,500 was offered to such persons before they had proved their title in a Court of law.

MR. HALDANE: As regards the first part of the Question the War Office has paid this sum of £5,500 to the Misses Knapping—the owners of the manor. The reply to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative. The reply to the third part of the Question is in the affirmative. As regards the last part of the Question the payment was made after evidence of title had been given which satisfied the legal advisers of the War Department.

Territorial Field Artillery.

SIR SAMUEL SCOTT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how many batteries of the Territorial field artillery have been equipped with harness and guns; and whether he can give a date by which all batteries will be fully equipped.

MR. HALDANE: Ninety-seven converted guns, nine mountain guns and forty-four howitzers have been issued to 125 battteries. The batteries will be fully equiped with guns by the end of the financial year. All the fourteen heavy batteries have been completely equipped with guns. Harness is available and is being issued with the guns.

Territorials and Politics.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that open-air political meetings at Brecon have been subjected to disorder and rowdyism by men wearing the uniform of the Territorial Army, and that, upon the police authorities being appealed to to safeguard the peaceful character of the meetings, they refused to interfere; and whether he will make inquiry into the matter with a view to securing to the people of Brecon the right of holding a peaceful public meeting free from interference by persons wearing His Majesty's uniform.

MR. HALDANE: It appears that at the meeting in question a woman who was speaking made disparaging remarks concerning the King's uniform. A few men of the Territorial Force and large numbers of civilians who were present protested, but no active interference was made with the meeting. No notice was given of the meeting, or steps would have been taken to prevent the presence of soldiers in uniform.

Reduction of the South African Garrison.

MAJOR RENTON (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what cavalry regiments and what infantry battalions it is proposed to remove from South Africa, and when; and at what stations these units are at present quartered.

MR. ASHLEY: At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the names of the cavalry regiment and of the four infantry battalions which will be withdrawn from the South African garrison between the 7th September, 1908, and the 6th February, 1909?

MR. HALDANE: The names and stations of the regiments are as follows:—4th Dragoon Guards, Middleburg, Cape Colony; 2nd East Kent, Harrismith, Orange River Colony; 2nd Norfolk, Pietermaritzburg; 2nd Yorkshire, Middleburg, Cape Colony; 3rd Worcestershire, Wynberg, Cape Colony.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Is this step being taken with a view to the ultimate disbandment of any of these battalions?

MR. HALDANE: That does not in the least arise out of the Question on the Paper.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what will be the number of cavalry regiments and infantry battalions at Home and Abroad, respectively, when the reduction of the South African garrison by one cavalry regiment and four battalions of infantry has been carried out.

MR. HALDANE: There will be fourteen cavalry regiments at home and fourteen abroad, and seventy-four infantry battalions at home and seventy-four abroad.

Forage for Yeomanry Horses.

MAJOR RENTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether, if Yeomanry commanding officers are able to purchase forage locally, at no additional cost to the public, from farmers who lend fields for drill or who otherwise assist the Territorial Army, they may be permitted to do so.

MR. HALDANE: All cases where forage can be purchased locally from farmers at a price not exceeding that ordinarily obtainable under contract in the district, if submitted to this Office by the General Officer Commanding, would be specially considered.

Militia Officers and the Third Battalions

MR. W. NICHOLSON (Hampshire, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many commissions, if any, have been offered to Militia officers who desire to come in as part of the 220 additional Regular officers required in the new third battalions.

MR. HALDANE: No such commissions have been offered to Militia officers in place of the proportion of Regular officers allocated to the new third battalions, nor was this at any time contemplated. As the outcome of a conference with the representatives of Militia commanding officers the Army Council have arranged to employ Special Reserve officers both with Regular units and at the depots, in the latter case where the number of recruits at the depots exceeds a certain number. Special Reserve officers will be employed with Regular units when, as often happens, there is a temporary shortage of Regular officers, or when Regular officers are seconded. I may add that to enable Special Reserve units to obtain junior officers pending the machinery of the new training corps becoming fully operative the Army Council have decided, as an interim arrangement, to allow candidates for commissions in the Special Reserve to qualify by serving with a Regular unit for four months provided that they apply for commissions before the 18th of next December, instead of the full probationary period of twelve months.

Discharges from the Territorial Force.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the custom for officers of the Territorial Force to discharge, without any reason being given, members of the Territorials who have very good characters and who have passed the medical examination satisfactorily; whether discharges ought to be coupled with the reason for such when the discharged person demands that reason; and whether he will make inquiries from Captain Denton, Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial Force, Wolverhampton, if anything of this kind has been done in his command.

MR. HALDANE: As the bearing of the Question depends on the specific case referred to in the last sentence, I have directed that inquiry shall be made into the matter.

Transvaal Gold Law.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have received a reply to their communication to the Governor of the Transvaal on the subject of the draft Gold Law of that Colony, especially in respect of Sections 127 and 128 thereof, under which special disabilities are to be imposed upon coloured persons, including British Indians.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): No, Sir, not yet. We telegraphed recently to inquire when the reply might be expected, but it has not yet been received.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): May I ask if the hon. Gentleman has received a resolution from the Johannesburg Association of Trade Unions objecting to the interference of the British Government in matters affecting the labour of the Colony?

COLONEL SEELY: I am not aware of it.

*MR. REES: But was not a telegram on the subject published long ago, and has not the hon. Gentleman had time to get the information?

COLONEL SEELY asked for notice.

Forced Labour in British East Africa.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware of the feeling expressed by the non-official community of British East Africa at the suggestion of the possibility that forced black labour was desired by them; and has he any official information substantiating the statement made in the presence of the governor of the Colony at the Nairobi labour meeting by a Mr. Swift, of Foot Hall, to the effect that Mr. Swift's need of labour had been communicated to the chiefs by the Provincial Commissioner, and that Mr. Swift was subsequently able to secure labour but that it was practically forced, and at first distasteful to the labourers concerned.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State has received through the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate a telegram from the Colonists' Association stating that they contradict the view said to be held in England that Lord Delamere and Mr. Baillie advocate forced labour and record their emphatic denial of such a suggestion. Mr. Swift's statement is too long to quote in full, but will be found printed at page 11 of the volume of correspondence relating to affairs in the East Africa Protectorate which has just been presented to Parliament.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can say whether natives who came looking for voluntary work were commandeered by the Government Labour Board of British East Africa to work on the roads; whether Government officials sent armed policemen at night into villages in order to seize and force natives to carry loads, because those natives had declined to give their labour voluntarily; and whether the Government of the Colony intends to force a large number of the Kisii, the majority of whom are declared to be innocent of any crime, to labour in building roads in return for the handing back to them of part of their recently captured cattle.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State has no information regarding the matters referred to in the first two portions of my hon. friend's Question, but is calling for a report from the Governor. With regard to the last part of my hon. friend's Question, he is aware from the answer which was given to him in the House on 20th February last of the expedition which, in consequence of several acts of murder and outrage, it was necessary to take against the Kisii tribe. During the operations a considerable number of cattle were captured, of which about one-fourth were sold and the proceeds employed partly to meet the cost of the expedition and partly to meet claims on account of cattle stolen by the Kisii from the Kavirondo. It was decided to restore the remainder of the cattle gradually as the pacification of the country proceeded. To require labour for road-making was considered by the Government of the Protectorate to be the most humane form of punishment which could be inflicted on the tribe, while the development of the country was also thereby promoted.

MR. ASHLEY: May I ask if the Government have yet come to any conclusion on this important matter?

COLONEL SEELY: I am not yet in a position to make any statement. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put a Question down before the Colonial Vote is taken.

South African Customs Conference.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Basutoland and the other South African Protectorates were represented at the late Customs Conference of the South African Colonies; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House any correspondence which has passed upon the subject.

COLONEL SEELY: The South African Protectorates were not represented at the recent Customs Conference. The Conference, however, has not led to any material change in the tariff. As I stated in the House on the 7th of May, it is not intended to lay any correspondence.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): In view of the importance of this matter to the South African Protectorates will the Government not reconsider the question of laying correspondence?

COLONEL SEELY: The Government are fully alive to the importance of this matter as affecting the Protectorates, but do not consider it either desirable or necessary to publish the correspondence for reasons I shall be happy to give the hon. Gentleman if he puts down a further Question.

Imperial Conference.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies with respect to the official to whom, in pursuance of the promise given by Lord Elgin at the last Imperial Conference, the duty has been assigned of carrying on the work of that conference and communicating with the other Governments of the Empire, whether any staff has been provided to assist him in carrying out his duties; whether he is able to give his time exclusively to such duties, or if not, what other duties he is expected to perform; have any communications passed between the Governments of the Empire since the Imperial Conference and on what subjects; and will the same be laid.

COLONEL SEELY: In Lord Elgin's despatch of 21st September, 1907, which has been laid before the House, it was stated that the Secretariat of the Imperial Conference would be linked to the Dominions department of the Colonial Office, without being entirely merged in it, and that the Secretary would be a member of the Department, but would also have his own special and separate duties. This has been carried into effect. The Secretary is provided with such assistance as he requires from the staff of the Dominions department and, in addition to his special duties as Secretary, which may be expected to grow, he is associated with the general work of the Dominions department, especially on the South African side. Since the Imperial Conference, correspondence has passed between the Governments of the Empire on various subjects raised at the Conference, but it would be premature to lay papers at present.

MR. LYTTELTON: Does the hon. Gentleman use the words "at present" advisedly? Is there any chance in the near future of this correspondence being laid?

COLONEL SEELY: I think we shall be glad to lay some correspondence later on.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Are we to assume that a permanent Secretary has been appointed to carry on the work?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, I have stated so.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: May I ask the name of the Secretary?

COLONEL SEELY: Oh yes; it is Mr. Just, the head of the South African Department.

Germany and the Patents Act.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will give the exact terms of the declaration which has been made by His Majesty's Government in respect of Section 27 of the Patents and Designs Act, 1907, and which the German Imperial Secretary of State for the Interior states has placed the situation for German patentees in a somewhat better light.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. J. A. PEASE, Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The terms were as follows:—"Section 27 does not require that every patent should be worked in this country. It merely provides that if it can be shown that after the liberal interval allowed by the Act, a British patent is worked mainly or exclusively abroad, any person can call on the patentee to show why his patent is not worked to an adequate extent in this country. If the patentee can give an explanation satisfactory to the Comptroller and the Court, his patent will not be revoked. If he can show that further time is required to enable him to work his patent to an adequate extent, the necessary time may be allowed by the Comptroller, or, if the Comptroller refuses it, by the Court."

Restriction on Importation of Cattle.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if there is any record of any foreign Power having remonstrated with the British Government on questions of a purely domestic nature, such as restriction of importation of live cattle.

MR J. A. PEASE: Yes, Sir. Foreign Powers have frequently objected to restrictions imposed here on the the importation of live cattle, and on matters of a similar nature.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Was the objection raised on the ground of quarantine, or on what ground?

MR. J. A. PEASE asked for notice of any Question as to the particular grounds.

County Councils—Collection of Duties through the Post Office.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is proposed to arrange that county councils may use the post offices in their various counties in connection with the collection of the duties referred to in Clause 6 of the Finance Bill, 1908.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): Yes, it is the intention that post offices should be available for the sale of the licences in question on behalf of county councils in England and and Wales.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND: Will the notices go out through the Post Office or will the county councils have to send them?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The county councils will send the notices out and the Post Office will receive the money.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND: But previously the notices were sent out by the Post Office?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Oh, no!

Old Age Pensions—Veterans of Industry.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether James Walker, aged fifty-five, who was recently charged with bigamy at the Huddersfield Police Court, and who is alleged to have gone through the form of marriage with eleven women, will be entitled on attaining the age of seventy to an old-age pension; and, if not, under what provisions of the Bill will he be excluded from the reward intended for veterans of industry.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: I do not know whether my hon. friend means to imply that the circumstances of the case to which he alludes amount to an irrefutable proof of industry. If, as I understand, the case is still under the consideration of the Court, I do not think it would be proper for me to say anything on the subject in this place.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say if there is any record of a man after marrying eleven wives attaining the age of seventy?

[No Answer was returned.]

Old-age Pensions—Reduction of Income.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Clause 4, Section 3, of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, will render nugatory arrangements entered into before the passing of the Bill for a reduction of income in order to obtain a larger pension, such as the reduction of a compensation award recently made in a case before Judge Ruegg.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The object of subsection (3) of Clause 4 of the Bill is to render nugatory such collusive arrangements for the reduction of a pensioners' income as those to which my hon. friend refers. With reference to the latter portion of the Question, my hon. friend appears to have been misinformed as to the action of Judge Ruegg. Since answering the Question put by my hon. friend on the 15th inst., I have received the following telegram from Judge Ruegg:—"With reference to Question asked by Mr. Harold Cox in House yesterday as to my action at Tunstall County Court, facts incorrectly stated. Man was not receiving compensation at all, but £100 was paid into Court in respect of death of his son. I had under the Act to apportion this. I was asked to give him £20 down to clear his debts and 12s. 6d. a week out of balance. I thought this too much and said so, and then 9s. 6d. was suggested and some remark made that this would not prejudice his rights if Old-Age Pensions Bill passed. I allowed 9s. 6d. solely because I thought it was maximum sum I could allow, having regard to the sum remaining in Court. Will you correct."

MR. HAROLD COX: Does the Judge deny that the man asked for a lower sum so that he might get the old-age pension?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE. I think not.

Saturday Afternoon Arrests.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will consider the desirableness of inserting in the Bail Bill a clause forbidding the execution of warrants for arrests on Saturday afternoons, except in such cases as, in the opinion of the officer entrusted with the warrant, delay would defeat the ends of justice.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): The Secretary of State does not think such a clause would be desirable, nor would it be within the scope of the Bill; but he considers that the Bill, by giving magistrates the opportunity of providing for release on bail in such cases, will go as far as is practicable or desirable to effect the purpose the hon. Member has in view.

The Imprisoned Suffragists.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the ladies sentenced to various terms of imprisonment in connection with the agitation for woman suffrage are not merely compelled to wear clothes in prison which have been worn previously by ordinary women convicts, but are likewise deprived of their boots and shoes and compelled to wear boots worn many times by ordinary women convicts, which, of course, cannot be boiled or washed, like the clothes, and the inside of which is at times in a filthy condition; whether he is aware that these boots and shoes are frequently too large or too small for the wearers, and in both cases entail extreme discomfort, resulting in corns and blisters on the feet, followed by abrasion of the skin, bleeding, and sores, and that at times the feet of the prisoners have been pierced by nails sticking up in these boots and shoes; and whether, having regard to the fact that the enforced wearing of the prison dress secures the infliction of indignity, these ladies may be allowed, having regard to the pain and discomfort caused by the wearing of prison boots and shoes, to wear their own boots and shoes during their imprisonment.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: All the clothing issued to the ladies who are undergoing imprisonment was either new or clean, and new shoes were issued in every case. If one of them complains that her shoes do not fit, or that they cause blisters, the shoes will be immediately changed, but no such complaint has been made.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that these ladies make no complaint?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I fail to see how grievances can be remedied unless they are brought to the notice of the authorities.

Unemployment in London.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether having regard to the fact that the latest available statistics with regard to unemployment showed a percentage of 7·9 of unemployed workmen in London, and that on the 22nd ultimo at a conference of metropolitan guardians, held in the parish of St. Mary, Islington, a resolution was unanimously passed that His Majesty's Government should at the earliest possible date initiate legislation to provide productive labour to meet the wants of those who become workless through no fault of their own, and in view of the approaching winter, the Government will initiate a scheme based upon sound economic principles dealing with the question before the end of the year.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I have received a copy of the resolution referred to, and I have stated in reply that I shall be happy to consider any practical suggestions which the conference may wish to make on the subject of the relief of the unemployed. I cannot, however, undertake to comply with the suggestion contained in the last part of the Question.

MR. MYER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that unemployment has now increased to 8·2 per cent., as compare with 3·6 per cent. at the correspondin period last year? Seeing that when th harvest and hop-picking is over ther will be a great influx of population int the Metropolis, does not the right hon Gentleman intend to take any action with regard to unemployment?

MR. JOHN BURNS said he did not anticipate any inrush into London to the extent suggested by the hon. Gentleman. He was dealing with the other aspect of the question in reply to the Question of the hon. Member for Tottenham.

Speed of Motor Cars.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board, if he will consider the advisability of addressing a warning to manufacturers of motor vehicles that after a certain day no car will be registered capable of exceeding a speed limit of twenty miles under ordinary circumstances.

MR. HAROLD COX: At the same time may I ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that motor cars, when driven at a high speed, cause annoyance and damage by stirring up dust and by destroying the surface of roads; and whether he will consider the advisability of prohibiting the use upon the public highway of any motor vehicle which is capable of being driven by its own engines at a greater speed than fifteen miles an hour on the level.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware that high speed is one of the factors in the production of dust and the wear of the surface of the highway. The Royal Commission on Motor Cars considered the proposal that there should be a compulsory mechanical limitation of the speed capacity of motor cars. They inquired in detail into the practicability of such a scheme, and came to a conclusion adverse to it. Hence I am afraid I could not adopt the suggestions made in the Questions.

*MR. REES: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the case of the more dangerous and, until the last moment, invisible bicycle, which cuts down passengers who have escaped the more obvious motor car?

MR. CATHCART WASON: Does the right hon. Gentleman feel bound by every suggestion made by the Royal Commission on Motor Cars?

MR. JOHN BURNS: On the contrary, since I have been in office I have had sixty-nine applications from local authorities to mitigate the speed of motor cars, and in many cases in congested or narrow thoroughfares to reduce it from the maximum of twenty miles to ten, five, and in one case even two miles. In the majority of cases I have taken the side of reason and moderation, and have complied with the request.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Dealing with the question of dust, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman, seeing that it is impossible to do away with motor cars entirely, if he will issue a circular to the local authorities advising them to tar all the roads?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Every reasonable facility which the Local Government Board can grant to local authorities for mitigating the dust nuisance will be given. The department invariably gives sympathetic consideration to each application.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is a mechanical governor, worked automatically, which reduces the speed of motor cars to any desired limit, and will he make its adoption compulsory?

*MR. SPEAKER: That Question was asked and answered the other day.

MR. JOHN BURNS: As an engineer I may say that I know how governors can be tampered with.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board whether, in view of the increasing number of motor vehicles and the speed at which they are driven, he will issue a circular to local authorities pointing out the action open to them under the Motor Act, 1903.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The matter to which my hon. friend refers has engaged my attention for some time past. I have caused statements to be prepared in relation to the applications which have been made to me for regulations reducing the speed limit, and as a preliminary to the issue of a circular I am obtaining a Report from the inspector who has held most of the local inquiries on the subject.

Settlement of Insane Paupers.

SIR J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that a person named Robert Ridley, being apprehended in the parish of Cavers, in the county of Roxburgh, on a charge of attempted rape, and found by the sheriff to be insane and committed to the Melrose asylum, is a native of Bellingham, in Northumberland, born there and having a settlement there and no settlement in Scotland; whether he is aware that the guardians of the poor of Bellingham parish agreed to pay the parish of Cavers for his keep in Melrose asylum and asked for an account, which was rendered to them and amounted to £23 12s. 2d.; whether the Local Government Board has since informed the guardians of Bellingham that they have no power to pay this sum, and, if so, on what grounds the guardians were overruled by the Local Government Board; and whether the future charges incurred for keep in the Melrose asylum will be paid by the guardians of Bellingham in the first instance direct.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware of the facts of this case. I may say that the Local Government Board have not overruled the decision of the guardians in the matter. They were asked by the guardians if it was legal for them to refund the cost of the maintenance of the man in the Scottish asylum, and it was in answer to this inquiry that they informed the guardians to the effect stated in the Question. I have since received further communications on the subject, and I am taking steps which I hope may bring about a satisfactory settlement of the matter.

Unemployment.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the percentage of the unemployed for the month of June and how it compares with the same month in 1907; whether he has been able to form any estimate of the number of unskilled men at present out of employment; and whether, in view of the almost unprecedented scarcity of employment at this time of the year, he proposes to take any immediate steps to mitigate the consequent distress.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: The Returns made by trade unions to the Board of Trade show 8·2 per cent. of the members as unemployed at the end of June last. The percentage for June, 1907, was 3·6. I do not think it is possible to give any accurate estimate of the total number of unskilled men at present out of employment. As my hon. friend is aware, the Government propose to renew the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, for another year. Moreover, a sum of £200,000 in aid of the expenses under the Act is included in the Supplementary Estimate just issued.

Mr. ALDEN: May I ask whether any of the local authorities are engaged in this work?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: Very few of the local authorities who received grants out of last year's fund are actually engaged at this moment in relief work, and many of them still have a small balance in hand.

Mr. MYER: May I ask my right hon. friend whether he does not intend to initiate some new policy? We have now waited two years and a half for some new policy with regard to the unemployed.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to make a speech when putting a Question.

Earl WINTERTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree with the statement in the question as to the unprecedented scarcity of employment?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I do not altogether.

Protection of Cables.

Mr. BEAUCHAMP (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that a notice has been issued by the Commercial Cable Company to the owners of certain trawlers warning them to avoid trawling within the area of 51° 15′ and 52° 20′ North latitude and 10° 20′ and 14° West longitude; and whether the Cable Company has any authority to issue such warning and to attempt to close a fishing ground of about 15,000 square miles.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): My attention has been called to the notice in question and to the reply of the trawler owners concerned. As my hon. friend may be aware, in conjunction with the President of the Board of Trade I have appointed a Committee to inquire into the whole question of injuries to cables believed by the cable companies to be due to trawlers, and the correspondence has been laid before the Committee, which is now taking evidence. The Committee consists of:—Sir J. C. Lamb, C.B., C.M.G., formerly Second Secretary to the Post Office, Chairman; Mr. W. R. Culley, I.S.O., Submarine Superintendent in the Engineering Department of the Post Office; Commander G. C. Frederick, R.N., Professional member of the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade; Mr. C. E. Fryer, I.S.O., Superintending Inspector of English Fisheries; Mr. W. S. Green, C.B., Chief Inspector of Irish Fisheries; Commander G. M. Marston, R.N., of the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty.

Post Office Assistants.

Mr. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General at what date will the Post Office assistants at head offices and others receive the benefits of the recommendations of the Hobhouse Commission.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The revision of the pay of assistants is proceeding at the present time. The benefits date back to 1st January, 1908.

Llangollen School.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been drawn to a letter from the managers of the Llangollen Church of England School to the Board, complaining of the conversion of the boys and girls departments of the school into a mixed department, and claiming that such conversion was illegal; whether further letters asking for a reply to their complaint were written by the managers on the 17th March, the 23rd April, and the 15th June; and whether the Board is now in a position to deal with the matter, and, if so, in what way.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): The letters referred to raise legal questions of some importance, upon which the Board are taking advice. I am not able at present to announce the decision of the Board, but I hope to be in a position to do so very shortly.

LORD R. CECIL: From whom is the right hon. Gentleman seeking advice? Is it the Law Officers of the Crown? Are they responsible for this long delay of four or five months?

MR. RUNCIMAN: There has been no delay in the matter.

Willesden Education Prosecutions.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to the action of the Willesden Education Committee in ordering William Barnard of that place to be summoned every fortnight before the local magistrates until he consents to inflict what he holds to be a grave injury upon his son by forcing him to renew his attendance at a certain school for mentally-deficient children in that district; whether he is aware that doctors have constantly stated in evidence before the Bench that fresh air and manual labour are better for this boy than the compulsory companionship of weak-minded children; that the boy has recently been attending an ordinary school in Essex with good results; that since his return to Willesden, his father, who earns 25s. a week and has five other children, has already been fined over £4 since last May; whether education committees are under any, and, if so, what, direct statutory obligation to undertake fortnightly prosecutions in such cases; and, if not, whether he will take steps to ensure that the system shall now cease in this particular case.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have no information as to the case other than that contained in the hon. Member's Question. Under Section 4 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, it is the duty of a parent to cause his child to receive efficient elementary instruction, and under Section 4 (1) of the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, that duty extends to children who are defective within the meaning of the Act if a certified special class or school is within reach. The local education authority are required by Section 23 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, to enforce the bye laws as to school attendance. I do not understand from the Question whether the parent objects to his child receiving education at all or only to his being instructed in a school for defective children. In the latter case I may point out that under Section **2** (5) of the Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act, 1899, it is open to him to claim that his child should be medically examined in order to ascertain whether he has attained such a mental and physical condition as to be fit to attend an ordinary public elementary school, provided that this claim shall not be made within less than six months after the child has been previously examined.

MR. BOWLES: In view of the fact that this man is being slowly ruined by the action of the Education Committee, which I understand is not obligatory action, will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiry into the matter?

MR. RUNCIMAN: Yes, Sir; if the hon. Gentleman wishes.

Medical Inspection of Schools.

MR. GARDNER (Berkshire, Wokingham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether it is implied by the provisions of Article 25 (*c*) of the Code of 1908, that grants may be entirely withheld from all the schools under a local education authority, if that authority does not provide for medical inspection under the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907; and whether, instead of receiving any grant for their new work, the education authorities will be liable to lose grants altogether if they fail to perform that additional work to the satisfaction of the Board of Education.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: Section 13 (2) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, imposes upon local education authorities the duty of providing for the medical inspection of children. Article 25 (*c*) of the Code makes compliance with this statutory duty a condition of the receipt of the Parliamentary grants. With regard to the last paragraph of the Question, I can only repeat what I and my predecessor have already stated, that the Government are unable to hold out any hope of a special grant in anticipation of the additional sum to be provided in connection with the Education Bill.

Pensions of Ex-Naval and Military Civil Servants.

Mr. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Treasury has had under consideration the question of the pensions of ex-naval and ex-military Civil servants; and whether, in view of the recommendations of Sir Edward Ward's Committee, the Treasury is prepared to reckon the ex-naval and ex-military service of these civil servants towards pension.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.): I have nothing to add to the numerous replies which have been given by my predecessor and myself on this subject during the session.

Beef Supplies.

Mr. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the Board of Agriculture, whether, in view of the diminished supplies of native and foreign animals for slaughter and the enhanced price of beef to the consumer, also of the difficulty in the replacing of cows for the supply of pure milk, he will consider the advisability of removing the embargo on Canadian cattle.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somersetshire, S.): The Board have no evidence of any decrease in the number of native cattle, and inasmuch as there has been an increase in the number of milking cows in recent years there does not appear to have been any difficulty in replacing them. There is no present intention of proposing legislation in the direction suggested.

Mr. McARTHUR: Is the matter now under the special consideration of the Government?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY asked for notice of that.

Mr. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the price of beef to the producer in England has been considerably lower this year?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The price of beef has been falling lately.

Lord R. CECIL: Is not the fall in price due to the attention that has been drawn in this House to the operations of the American trust?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The *Daily Mail* says so, but I have no reason to suppose that that has had anything to do with it.

Cattle Disease in the United States and Canada.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state the number and variety of cattle diseases existent in Canada and the United States by the last Reports from those countries.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: It would appear that anthrax, contagious abortion, Texas fever and tuberculosis exist in the United States. In Canada, anthrax, tuberculosis, and parasitic mange are present.

Canadian Cattle.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state if free importation of live cattle is allowed into Canada from the United States or elsewhere; if any quarantine regulations are existent in Canada, and their nature; and how the line is preserved over the 3,000 odd miles of frontier.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Live cattle are admitted into Canada from the United States and elsewhere subject to the conditions prescribed in the Regulation relating to Animals' Quarantine which were issued by the Canadian Government last year. A quarantine of from sixty to ninety days is enforced on all cattle imported except from the United States, Newfoundland and Mexico. The Board are not in a position to reply to the last part of the Question.

Deptford Foreign Cattle Market.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether a single case of disease amongst British cattle or sheep has been traced to cattle or sheep which have been hitherto slaughtered in the Deptford Foreign Cattle Market.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: There is no direct evidence of any such case, but I may add that in the opinion of the Chief Veterinary Officer to the Privy Council the outbreaks of Foot and Mouth disease, which occurred in London, Bedfordshire, and Kent in 1880, were traceable to foreign cattle landed at Deptford.

MR. ASHLEY: Do these regulations in any way restrict the food supplies of the people of this country?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Not in my opinion.

Roads in Skye.

SIR J. DEWAR (Inverness): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a numerously-signed petition from the district of Staffin and Eastside, in Skye, requesting a grant from the Congested Districts Board to help in the formation of a new road from Staffin to Portree; is he aware that this road will shorten the distance between Portree and the thickly-populated crofting districts of Staffin, Valtos, etc., by about twelve miles and will be of very great service to a large crofting population in the movement of their stock to market and for other purposes; that the road will traverse and open up one of the most fertile districts in the island; that Lord MacDonald, the proprietor, has given wayleave free of charge, and that the district committee has undertaken to contribute 25 per cent. of the cost and maintain the road on completion; is he also aware that on a former occasion the Congested Districts Board led the people of the district to believe that on these conditions being fulfilled the Board would contribute the remainder of the cost; that the Board now declines or delays to carry this promise into effect, and that this delay is causing dissatisfaction in the district; and will he take steps to induce the Congested Districts Board to carry out the promise they made with the least possible delay.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The petition has been received and considered by the Congested Districts Board. I am unable to accept the narrative of my hon. friend's Question in all its particulars, especially as to the promise alleged to have been made by the Congested Districts Board. The district clerk was informed in December, 1904, that the Board made no promise; and they have resolved to take no action. In the meantime the Board have offered a grant on the usual terms for an access road to Staffin Pier.

Traction Engine Traffic Regulations.

SIR J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is now in a position to say how much longer the tradesmen in the county of Roxburgh will have to wait before he introduces a measure to abolish the statutable obligation of a traction engine owner in Scotland to keep a third man to walk with the engine.

MR. SINCLAIR: I hope to be able at an early date to introduce a Local Government Amendment Bill and to include in it a clause dealing with the question raised by my hon. friend.

MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the absolute necessity of all traction engines being accompanied by a third man for the protection of people in charge of horses?

MR. SINCLAIR'S reply was inaudible.

Glasgow Distress Committee.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware of the serious financial position of the Glasgow Distress Committee; and, having regard to the promise twice repeated, that time would be given which would include time for discussion of the question of the allocation of moneys granted by Parliament for the purpose of unemployed relief, and also having regard to the fact that no opportunity for such discussion has been afforded, will he now state the intentions of the Government in regard to a further grant of money.

Mr. CLELAND (Glasgow, Bridgeton): At the same time may I ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been directed to the distress at present existing in Glasgow; and whether, having regard to the fact that the money at the disposal of the Distress Committee will be exhausted in the course of the next few weeks, the Government intend to take any steps, and, if so, what, to prevent the imminent closing down of the relief works at Palacerigg, and the consequent addition to the already large number of unemployed in Glasgow.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I am fully aware of the position referred to by my hon. friend and the question of a grant to Glasgow will engage my immediate attention in the event of the Supplementary Estimate for the unemployed which has lately been laid on the Table being accepted by the House.

Mr. WATT: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the reason that Glasgow got so little is the largeness of the citizens' subscriptions?

Mr. SINCLAIR: No Sir, that has nothing whatever to do with the case.

Edinburgh Distress Committee.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware of the differences which have arisen between the Local Government Board on the one hand, and the town council and the distress committee of the city of Edinburgh on the other, regarding the expenditure of certain funds by the distress committee; and whether he will give an opportunity for considering the subject upon the Vote for the Local Government Board in Scotland, and when?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I am making inquiries with regard to the first part of my hon. friend's Question; the second part has been already dealt with by the Prime Minister's reply to my right hon. friend the Member for Clackmannan and Kinross.

Scottish Traction Engine Regulation.

Sir J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, whether he is aware of the number of official prosecutions of owners of traction engines for not employing a third man to walk in front of the engine in the county of Roxburgh; and whether, as a similar obligation imposed on the people of England and Wales by statute was repealed eight years ago, he will explain why the people of Scotland should still be prosecuted in the criminal courts where no injury or negligence is alleged against the accused?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs): The prosecutions in Roxburghshire on this subject for three years past are only ten in number, and apply to only three parties. As to the remainder of the question there are misapprehensions. The difference between the statutory provisions in the two countries is simply this, that in England a third person must accompany the engine, and in Scotland the third person must do so on foot. I have represented to my right hon. friend, the Secretary for Scotland, that in any amending Bill as to local government he might without disadvantage equate the Scottish with the English law in this particular.

Private Prosecutions in Ireland.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland can he explain why it is that the Crown has refused to prosecute in the case of Patrick M'Dermott, of Knoxalassa, near Riverstown, county Sligo, who was returned for trial at the recent assizes in Sligo on the charge of having discharged firearms at several persons in May last on the public road with intent to kill; whether it was as a result of an inquiry before two resident magistrates that M'Dermott was returned for trial; and, if so, what further steps, if any, the Crown intend to take in this matter.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N., for Mr. CHERRY): The prosecution in this case was not instituted by the police, or by the directions of the Attorney-General. It was commenced by a man named Leonard on his own responsibility. The case was heard at Riverstown Petty Sessions on 4th June last by a bench of nine magistrates, including two resident magistrates, and M'Dermott was returned for trial to the assizes recently held at Sligo. Leonard, the prosecutor, did not proceed with the case at the assizes, and it consequently dropped. The Crown have not taken, and do not intend to take, any action in the matter.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Are not private prosecutions absolutely unknown in Ireland?

MR. BIRRELL: This was begun anyhow.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Why was it not continued?

MR. BIRRELL: Because it was dropped.

Clooneen Evicted Tenant.

MR. F. MEEHAN (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Bryan Campbell, of Clooneen, Drumkeerin, county Leitrim, made application to the Estates Commissioners to be reinstated in his holding from which he was evicted on the Marshall estate; whether the Estates Commissioners, having sent an inspector on the farm, are taking any action to have Campbell reinstated; and, if so, can he say when the Estates Commissioners will reinstate him.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have considered the application of Bryan Campbell for reinstatement in the holding from which he was evicted in 1907, and have decided to take no action thereon.

Kilroosk Evicted Tenant.

MR. F. MEEHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that James Rooney, of Kilroosk, who was evicted from his farm on the Clements estate, situated near Manorhamilton. county Leitrim, on the 19th of June last, became a judicial tenant under agreement and under rather adverse circumstances; whether before being evicted Rooney offered twenty years purchase and one half-year's rent to the landlord, which was refused, the latter demanding twenty-three years purchase and one year's rent; whether an application for reinstatement has been received by the Estates Commissioners from the evicted tenant; and, if so, what steps are being taken to have him reinstated.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners received an application from James Rooney on the 6th instant, and will consider it when dealing with the estate on which the evicted holding is situate.

Delivery of Irish Mails—Sligo Prosecution.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at the Sligo Assizes, on Thursday 9th July, ten men were charged with having assembled to disturb the public peace and prevented a postman from delivering His Majesty's mails, that the Judge told the jury that there was no room for doubt, and that the jury disagreed; and whether it is the intention of the executive to allow these persons to escape punishment.

MR. BIRRELL: The jury disagreed in the case referred to, and the defendants entered into recognisances to appear at the next Assizes. It will be for my right hon. friend the Attorney-General to decide in due course whether the prosecution is to be continued. The matter has not yet come before him for consideration.

Boycotting at Multyfarnham.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the facts with regard to boycotting and intimidation disclosed at the petty sessions of Multyfarnham on Saturday 11th July; and whether the police authorities intend to take action regard to the possible effects upon their medical school of the passing into law of the Irish Universities Bill.

MR. ASQUITH: It is proposed that there shall be in the Charter of the new University no clause restricting the Senate from giving full recognition, if it is deemed fit, to the work done in the Royal College of Surgeons. I believe that in these circumstances the Royal College of Surgeons will find no difficulty in future in continuing the work that it has done so effectively in the past; but, if in the working of the new system it should prove that the Royal College of Surgeons has suffered injury, I hope (without giving any pledge) that the Treasury may be found not indisposed to consider favourably an application for putting the college in a position to continue its work.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION (No. 2) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 240.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 240.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 327.]

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 241.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 241.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 328.]

HANDLOOM WEAVING (IRELAND) BILL.

Reported, with an Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 242.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 242.]

Bill, as amended (by the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 329.]

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 330.]

HOUSE OF LORDS (MANUSCRIPTS).

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to request that their Lordships will be pleased to communicate to this House a Copy of the Manuscripts of the House of Lords, Volume IV. (New Series).—(*Sir Thomas Esmonde.*)

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Mr. STUART-WORTLEY reported from the Chairmen's Panel: That they had discharged Sir Francis Channing from being Chairman of Standing Committee A, and had appointed Mr. Eugene Wason to act as Chairman of Standing Committee A. in his place.

That they had discharged Sir David Brynmor Jones from being Chairman of Standing Committee B, and had appointed Sir Francis Channing to act as Chairman of Standing Committee B, in his place.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

EXPIRING LAWS CONTINUANCE BILL.

"To continue various expiring Laws," presented by Mr. Hobhouse; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 331.]

POLITICAL OFFENDERS PUNISHMENT BILL.

"To limit the punishment consequent on certain offences of a political character to imprisonment as first-class misdemeanants," presented by Mr. Robert Pearce; supported by Mr. Burt, Mr. Cobbold, Mr. Charles Corbett, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Kettle, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Snowden, Mr. Stanger, and Mr. Osmond Williams; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 332.]

DEATHS REGISTRATION AND BURIALS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Registration of Deaths and to Burials," presented by Mr. George Greenwood; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Mr. John Robertson, Mr. Smeaton, Dr. Rutherford, Mr. Hart-Davies, Dr. Shipman, and Mr. Atherley-Jones: to be read a second time upon Friday 31st July, and to be printed. [Bill 333.]

PUBLIC WORKS LOANS BILL.

"To grant money for the purpose of certain Local Loans out of the Local Loans Fund; and for other purposes relating to Local Loans," presented by Mr. Hobhouse; to be read a second time to-morrow; and to be printed. [Bill 334.]

LICENSING BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

*THE CHAIRMAN ruled out of order Motions standing in the names of the hon. Members for Hythe, York and Clapham, to postpone the clause, and also an Amendment standing first on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for the Edgbaston Division of Birmingham to insert after (1) "If it be shown to the satisfaction of the licensing justices in any district that the number of on-licences in that district is excessive having regard to the needs of the population the." He stated that this should be moved at a later period of the clause.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE (Birmingham, Edgbaston) submitted that his Amendment came in better and more grammatically at the beginning of the clause and he could not quite see why it should be out of order at that stage.

*THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that the hon. Member had two Amendments, and if the two were connected——

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE said that he proposed to take each Amendment separately on its own merits.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Then if the first Amendment is taken alone it must come on later in the clause.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE: Is there not a danger that it may be anticipated? I fancy that it will be if it is postponed.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have given my ruling.

*MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) moved an Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for the Walton Division to provide that the authority to reduce the number of licences should be Quarter Sessions on a reference from licensing justices. He said the existing law was practically embraced in this Amendment, and the Government should show some reason for departing from it. They had a scheme for the reduction of licences under the Act of 1904, under which Quarter Sessions were the ruling authority. That had worked extremely well, and, therefore, the House ought to consider seriously before they made a departure whether there was any justification for it. He knew there had always been more or less of a quarrel between the temperance party and the trade with regard to Quarter Sessions. The matter was threshed out before the Royal Commission, and the mere fact that the Quarter Sessions had been placed by the law in their present position showed that their administration had been satisfactory, and that they continued to be the responsible authority under the Act of 1904 was very good ground for proposing that they should still occupy that position. They would be regarded as being more unbiassed than the licensing justices.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, at the beginning, to insert the words 'Quarter Sessions on a reference from.'"—(*Mr. Younger.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH. Fifeshire, E.): The Government cannot advise the Committee to accept this Amendment. It proposes, in fact, to continue under the conditions laid down in this Bill the machinery set up for the first time under the Act of 1904. This is a clause which imposes a statutory duty. It does not give a discretion except in regard to the selection of the particular houses which, when the scheme has been approved, will become subject to its operation. There is no reason for bringing in Quarter Sessions there. It is far better left with the licensing justices, who know the local conditions and circumstances. The main ground for setting up Quarter Sessions as an authority of this kind is that the compensation fund under the Act of 1904 was a county fund, separated into watertight compartments. Under the scheme of this Bill there is to be a national fund—one for the whole country, and the ground for bringing in Quarter Sessions no longer exists. Again to bring in Quarter Sessions would be to bring in a third authority between the licensing justices and the Licensing Commission, which will occasion additional delay and expense. Finally, it is important that the area should be small and not large. In no other way can you carry out a scheme which will have regard to local exigencies. On all these grounds I ask the House to reject the Amendment.

VISCOUNT MORPETH (Birmingham, S.) considered it undesirable that in local administration there should be a constant changing and chopping of the authorities. The right hon. Gentleman proposed later on that the proportion of houses should be a proportion over parishes and wards. Obviously the parish was an undesirable area over which to take the proportion, and a public-house might be, although at the edge of a parish, in reality a house serving an entirely different population. That would make the task of the licensing justices almost impossible. The Prime Minister realised that because in the schedule he had put in so many exceptions to the ratio that it was reduced to a pious opinion of the thinnest kind. It was most desirable that the work should be done by the Quarter Sessions, not because they were friendly or unfriendly to the temperance cause or trade, but because they controlled the area. In small areas there was much greater room for great variations in administration, owing to the idiosyncracies of some powerful member of the local Bench, whereas, if the matter was left to the Quarter Sessions, the considerations of a larger number of minds would be brought to bear on the matter.

*MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) also supported the Amendment. What were the reasons advanced by the Prime Minister? The right hon. Gentleman said Quarter Sessions were not so desirable an authority for deciding these matters as the local justices, first, because the licensing justices knew the local conditions so well. But surely Quarter Sessions knew them equally well. He had never heard it suggested that they did not know thoroughly the local conditions throughout the county. It was adopting a very narrow point of view to say that the licensing justices were the only people who could properly judge these questions, and that the Quarter Sessions could not do it equally as well. He did not think there was sufficient ground for stating that the licensing justices knew local conditions better than the Quarter Sessions. The Prime Minister said that the compensation fund was to be a national fund, but that under the Licensing Act of 1904 it was a county fund. He was not aware that the licensing justices were specially the people to look after the matter, because it was a national fund. He did not understand that they had that much greater breadth of view which would enable them to administer a national fund better than the Quarter Sessions. He would have thought that the wider and the more national the fund was made, the wider and broader ought to be the authority that dealt with it. Surely it was wiser to leave it to Quarter Sessions rather than hand it over to the licensing justices. The Prime Minister said that the area should be a small area. He did not think that county areas were very wide areas, and if they were going to have so many different kinds of areas for different kinds of administration all over the country, he thought they would get into great confusion. He would prefer that they should not have a different system of administration all over the country, but they ought to have, as far as possible, the same system; and if Quarter Sessions had worked perfectly well up to now—at least he had never heard anybody suggest that they had not—[MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh!"] Did hon. Gentlemen opposite suggest that they had done their work badly? [MINISTERIAL cries of "Yes," and OPPOSITION cries of "Name."] Could they suggest what particular Quarter Sessions had failed in their duties? He would like to hear evidence of that, because it was quite a new light to him that there was any fault to be found with Quarter Sessions. If grievances existed, he would have thought that the grievances were much greater from the decisions of the local justices than from those of Quarter Sessions; and he believed that there would be far more grievances arising from the decisions of the licensing justices than from the decisions of the Quarter Sessions. If licensing justices were to be put in authority, as now proposed under the Bill, he did not understand that there was to be any appeal from them except in so far as the new Licensing Commission was to supervise matters in general. He gathered that their decision was to be final to all intents and purposes, and that he looked upon with very considerable apprehension. The House in many matters recently, notably in criminal matters, had decided in favour of a power or Court of Appeal. But in matters with regard to licences, which some hon. Gentleman opposite thought it necessary to characterise as almost criminal in their tendencies, was there to be no Court of Appeal? He would have thought it was desirable rather than put the decision of matters of that kind in the hands of the licensing justices, to allow the parties to have a Court of Appeal; and no better Court of Appeal could be found than Quarter Sessions. He could not help feeling that the licensing bench was not the best bench to decide matters of that kind at all, because although they might be useful for summary purposes to come to some rough and ready decision, it must be remembered that in many of these cases where the interests were fairly balanced and local prejudices ran high, the licensing justices were not the proper people to whom to submit the matter. It was well known that on licensing benches persons connected with the trade could not sit in their own or in adjoining districts; whereas, in some areas at any rate, it was equally well known that those opposed to the trade might be and usually were extremely well represented. He thought that where such circumstances existed it could not be just or fair on the part of the House to make the licensing justices the only people to decide those cases. To suggest otherwise was to him a very astonishing proposition. He thought, therefore, there was every reason to adopt his hon. friend's Amendment, partly because not one of the Prime Minister's reasons against it was convincing; partly because it was most iniquitous to have a Court possessing such jurisdiction without appeal; and partly because the licensing justices were the very party specially open to local prejudices.

*MR. TALBOT (Oxford University) said he was sorry at the interruption to his hon. friend's speech from hon. Gentlemen below the gangway opposite, although it only assumed an inarticulate form. He gathered from it, however, that some hon. Gentleman had an objection to make to the fairness with which the licensing committees of the Quarter Sessions had discharged their very responsible duties. As one who had sat continuously as the Chairman of such a licensing committee, he must say that he had never heard a single murmur against the justice, fairness, and consideration given by those committees to these matters. The licensing committee had gone very carefully not only into the merits of individual cases of the licences submitted to them, but into the balance to be held between one part and another of the county which they represented. They had acquired a very great deal of information which could not be at the disposal of the licensing benches, and from that point of view he thought that the Prime Minister would be well advised to continue the same confidence now felt in those licensing committees of the Quarter Sessions, rather than place the work in the hands of local benches.

The Prime Minister said that the local licensing justices knew more about the matter than Quarter Sessions. That statement could not have been made by anyone who had had experience. Each bench in its own particular district knew best what were the wants of its own district. [MINISTERIAL ironical cheers.] But that was not the whole point. Each individual constituency in the kingdom knew its own affairs best, but the Imperial Parliament knew what was best for the whole country. What he said was that the licensing committee of the Quarter Sessions had a wider and a more comprehensive view of the needs of the district they represented than the local bench. There seemed to be a jealousy of Quarter Sessions on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He wished they would say what were the grounds for that jealousy. Would they say that harm had followed the exercise of their functions? So far as his opinion went, and it was based on many years experience, he could say that there was no fairer, more equitable body of men than those who sat on the licensing committees of the Quarter Sessions. They did a great deal of hard work without remuneration and exercised their functions with justice. If the right hon. Gentleman wanted to carry this Bill in a shape which could and would work, then he should have regard to the commonsense doctrine of giving to those people who knew, the power of carrying out its provisions.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) adjured the Prime Minister to enable the House to show confidence in those who worked the existing licensing system. If he read aright the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman its effect would be in Liverpool to take away from those who had the task of reducing licences the work hitherto put upon them and placing it in the hands of Quarter Sessions. He thought that that would be a retrograde step so far as Liverpool was concerned. In that city it was to the licensing justices that the effective reduction of the excessive number of licences was due.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE, rising to a point of order, said that in the county boroughs the whole of the licensing justices were the licensing authority.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR said that as he understood it, the effect of the Amendment would be to change in all county boroughs the licensing authority.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE said that if the Government really wished to have this reduction of licences carried out in a just and fair manner, and in accordance with the wishes and needs of the districts affected, they could not in the least object to the Amendment. They would have the assistance of two authorities instead of one. The local justices would have first to consider the matter, and the Quarter Sessions would only be brought into operation on reference of the matter to them by the local justices. That would be simply a continuance of the state of things that now existed. The Amendment did not alter the existing law, which, notwithstanding the disparaging remarks of hon. Gentlemen opposite, had worked extremely well. During the three and a half years that the Act of 1904 had been in operation there had been an average annual reduction of 1,500 licences, so that by the end of the time limit provided by the present Bill, the total reduction would, at the same rate, amount to somewhere about 23,000 licences. That was the number which the Government estimated would be extinguished under this Bill if it passed into law. These statistics got rid of the inarticulate objections of hon. Gentlemen on the other side to the Courts of Quarter Sessions. The real fact of the matter was that the Government did not want either the local justices or Quarter Sessions to have any voice in the matter. Under the clause as it stood, they had constituted themselves the sole authority for deciding how many licences were required in every urban or rural district in the country. They had left no option whatever to the local authorities. He was trying to show that the licensing justices were a very proper body for this function and he submitted he was in order in so doing.

THE CHAIRMAN said it was precisely because the hon. Gentleman was not addressing himself to the point, that he called him to order.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE bowed to the ruling of the Chairman and submitted in conclusion that the Prime Minister had shown no reason why the Government should be substituted for the licensing authority in this matter.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) expressed the opinion that it was extremely unfair that this insinuation should be made against the impartiality of the licensing justices, and that no hon. Gentlemen opposite should get up and give their reason for distrusting these bodies. They were certainly carrying out the ideas of hon. Members opposite in the debate on the Licensing Bill of 1904, when they constantly urged that absolute discretion should be left with the licensing justices and no discretion to Quarter Sessions. But the result of this clause was that neither the licensing justices nor the Quarter Sessions would have anything to do with the matter at all. It would be laid down by the clause that a certain number of licences were to be allocated to each locality, and it did not matter whether there were any licensing justices or Quarter Sessions. It certainly showed very little trust in the people.

*SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley) said that if the statement of the hon. Member who had just sat down was correct there was no reason for the Amendment. One of the great objections to the Act of 1904 was that it so largely destroyed and crippled the power of the justices. It was only tolerable that it should be done because under the arrangement of the Act, the compensation fund was under the control of Quarter Sessions. It was a limited fund, and they alone could allocate the whole of that fund. Under this Bill there would be no allocation of any fund by the justices over a number of districts. It was a national fund, and those who made this decision would only have to decide for the locality with which they were concerned. The chief reason which justified taking the power away from the local justices and putting it into the hands of Quarter Sessions ceased to exist under this Bill. If they read the evidence given before the Peel Commission they would find that from one end of the country to the other there was complaint that Quarter Sessions hung like a millstone round the neck of the administration of the licensing law by the local licensing justices. They found in almost every town in the country complaints that Quarter Sessions, which knew nothing of the localities or the houses, constantly overruled the decisions of those who had that local knowledge. That was one of the great objections to the administration of the law. The local justices frequently decided that a house was unnecessary, and ought to be abolished, and they continually had their decisions reversed. There was no more forcible complaint made before the Peel Commission than that. This Bill was to select the houses only whose licences should be taken away. That was a local matter, where local knowledge was required. It was an administrative matter. The amount of reduction would be fixed, and it would be for the justices to settle which houses should go. This involved no insinuation against Quarter Sessions or any reflection upon that body. It merely involved the opinion that the local justices on the spot had a closer, more accurate and intimate knowledge than Quarter Sessions could have. There was no reflection upon their honour or capacity. The local people must necessarily have the best knowledge.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has dealt with Quarter Sessions and local justices directly, and no one would suspect him of making any direct charge against the honour of the Quarter Sessions or the local licensing Bench. But I wish to remind the House that when reference was made on this side to Quarter Sessions suggestions came from the other side, not that Quarter Sessions were incompetent, but that they performed their duties in some ways unsatisfactorily. Those who cheered that statement have never had the courage to specify one single charge against any Quarter Sessions Court in the country. If those charges are to be lightly made as they were just now, and cheered, to the credit of the courage of hon. Gentlemen who cheered, quite apart from the foundations of those charges, they ought to get up and substantiate them. Pending that let me point out that the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is under a strange misconception. He told us that in the country at large there were considerable towns which had no practical representation on Quarter Sessions.

Sir THOMAS WHITAKER dissented.

Mr. WALTER LONG: If he denies that what becomes of the suggestion that Quarter Sessions have no local knowledge? Under the licensing law as it now stands, a decision of the licensing Bench is subject to appeal to Quarter Sessions. Not only would this Amendment carry out the existing law, but if it is not accepted you are reversing the present law. You are putting the local Bench in regard to the selection it has to make in the revision of licences in a position superior to Quarter Sessions, and in a different position from that which they occupy at the present time. The hon. Gentleman has said that Quarter Sessions hung like a millstone round the neck of the local justices. Will he go a little further? If it be a true charge it involves not only the honour but the credit of the Quarter Sessions. Why have Quarter Sessions hung like a millstone round the neck of licensing justices? Because where the local Benches have made recommendations those recommendations from the point of view of justice could not be affirmed by Quarter Sessions who stepped in and considered the whole case. That is the only justification for the charge he makes. But I come back to the law as it stands. The law makes Quarter Sessions the appellate body. Here you are taking away these licences eventually without any compensation at all. You are imposing powers which enable compensation to be paid. Where there is compensation under the Act of 1904 the decision of the local Bench is subject to appeal to Quarter Sessions. The actual proposal here is to give to the local justices a power that they do not hold at present and to take away that right of appeal. The Amendment is a just and proper one, not only if you are to make the Bill workable, but if you are to make it work with any measure of justice. I hope before this debate comes to an end we shall have made in Parliament by a responsible Member in an articulate form those charges against Quarter Sessions which up to the present moment have only been made indirectly. If they are made, and the names of the respective Quarter Sessions Courts given, there will be an answer to every one of them. Whatever the Committee may think of this Amendment they will say that Quarter Sessions have done their work not only justly and fairly, but as this House and the country would desire it to be done.

*Mr. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston) disagreed with the statement of the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley that the Act of 1904 had crippled or destroyed the powers of the local justices; the very opposite was the case. The local authorities had far more voice in the decisions of Quarter Sessions than they had before the Act of 1904. The object of this Amendment was to provide that in those decisions which vitally affected private interests the final voice should not be with those who had local interest, and possibly local bias, but with those who were far removed from influences of that kind, and who would give an impartial decision. Again and again the view taken by the Quarter Sessions when they first saw the report of the local justices against the renewal of licences had been modified or reversed upon a careful hearing of the case and of the evidence given before them. That was what they could not get from a local Bench. He thought it was a great pity that the Government had decided to reverse the whole system of the Act of 1904, under which the decision of the local licensing Bench was subject to appeal. The present system had worked successfully and exceedingly well. He wanted to give some part of the credit of that result to a gentleman who was never named, namely, the draftsman by whom the rules under the Act of 1904 had been framed. He believed that a very great deal of the credit for the smooth and successful working of that Act was due to those rules. They had been very carefully framed, and they provided what was not in the Act—that there should be a consultation between the county committee and the local

Bench. They provided for a series of meetings. At the first there was a preliminary consideration of the justices' reports, then at a later meeting, a careful consideration of the whole case, and at the third meeting the shares of the persons interested were finally determined. That system had worked extremely well; but he was afraid that under the somewhat hasty procedure of the local benches they would not get the same consideration given to the facts. He did not think that anyone on the other side of the House, who knew the circumstances, would deny that Quarter Sessions under the Act of 1904 had done their work well. Certainly no one on the Treasury Bench had denied that; nor could it be said that the Act had not been fully taken advantage of. The figures showed that nearly 95 per cent. of the funds it was possible to raise had been employed for the reduction of licences. He did not think that more could have been done by any tribunal than had been done by Quarter Sessions. It was a thousand pities that the system was to be done away with. The proposal could not be defended on the ground of restoring freedom to the local Benches, because although they would be taken from the control of the Quarter Sessions they would be put under the control of the Licensing Commission. Instead of having their decisions considered by a body of gentlemen in their own county, they would be subject to reversal by a body of gentlemen in London, who had no knowledge of the facts of the county, and who would simply act upon an arithmetical consideration and without regard to local and special circumstances which ought to be taken into account. He regretted that the Government had come to such a decision, and he hoped before the Bill passed into law, if it ever became law, further consideration would be given to the question whether the whole system under the Act of 1904 had not worked fairly well, and whether they could not still provide machinery for carrying this Act into effect so that the Administration of the Act might remain in the hands of those Courts which had already shown their capacity for dealing with the whole of this matter.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said he did not think the right hon. Gentleman had made clear his interruption of his hon. friend the Member for one of the Divisions of Birmingham. His hon. friend, as he understood, had stated clearly that in his view the system of Quarter Sessions since the Act of 1904, had discharged their duties well; and he understood that the interruption of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends was a distinct insinuation against the work of Quarter Sessions, and meant that Quarter Sessions had acted improperly and had not done their work efficiently since the passing of the Act of 1904. He thought, at this early stage of the Bill, and on this clause, that they should get absolutely clearly what was the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite on the work of the Quarter Sessions under the Act of 1904 Did they really assert that Quarter Sessions had done their work improperly? If they did, then he thought they ought to bring forward some evidence in support of their view. He did not think at this early stage of the Bill they ought to have this species of legislation by innuendo, for that was what it meant. The right hon. Gentleman had made an innuendo against the work of Quarter Sessions. Did he withdraw?

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: No; I distinctly stated that I made no insinuation. The noble Lord wants me to withdraw a statement I never made.

EARL WINTERTON said that he and his friends were very anxious to get the point cleared up. Then they were to understand, he presumed, that the reference to a millstone round the neck of the justices had reference to what took place before the passing of the Act of 1904, and that the right hon. Gentleman was satisfied with everything that had taken place since. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman and his friends supported the Opposition as against the Government on this Amendment. If the insinuation was not against the work of Quarter Sessions since the passing of the Act, but referred to what took place before, then what had taken place before could not really be compared with what had taken place since, because the duties of Quarter Sessions had been so altered that the right hon. Gentleman and his friends could have no objection to his hon. friend's proposal that the power should be in the hands of Quarter Sessions.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.) said hon. Members opposite had complained for some time of inarticulate interruptions. On a point of order, he wished to say that there had been a cause for that. His hon. friend on his right was ready to take part in the debate, and immediately the hon. Member for West Wiltshire had turned round and inquired "Who is rising on this side of the House?" and told the hon. Member to sit down. He thought the time allowed for the discussion of this Bill was limited enough as it was, and for any hon. Member of that House, whether he was Prime Minister or Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, or anything else, to tell another hon. Member that he was not to take part in the debate, was, to his mind, a piece of insufferable impertinence. [Cries of "Order."]

*The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman has just concluded his speech by making use of an unparliamentary expression. I call upon him to withdraw it.

Mr. H. C. LEA: If you ask me, Sir, to withdraw it, I will do so, but I consider it true nevertheless.

Mr. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton) said he only desired on this Amendment to add a very few observations to those which had already been made. It was one which he had placed on the Paper, and he greatly regretted that he had not been present to move it, and that he had not had the advantage of hearing the reasons given by the right hon. Gentleman. He had himself had some experience in the last few years, and since the Bill of his right hon. friend was passed into law, both of the conduct of the justices in the Court below and of the conduct of Quarter Sessions, and he desired to make no reflection of any kind upon the manner in which the justices in the Court below had performed their duties. But he would venture to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that in the Amendment now before them they were dealing with the very much broader question of whether or not there was to be any Court of Appeal at all in respect of these proposals, which affected very valuable interests on the part of those whose licences were to be taken away. The only other suggested Court of Appeal was the Committee sitting in London, which he did not think would be seriously put forward as an appellate tribunal in any shape or form. It had merely to go into the question for the purpose of coercion; it was not a tribunal to review the decision of the justices where they might have gone too far, but to stimulate them where it was thought that they had not gone far enough. While they were dealing with this point surely they were entitled to ask whether the whole tendency of our legislation had not been rather to widen the area of appeal, even under the criminal laws. The right of appeal was given in dealing with small proprietary rights in the County Court, which enabled an appeal, in certain circumstances, to be taken right to the House of Lords. And, in this instance, they were dealing with proprietary rights which, though somewhat truncated, were still of considerable value. None the less, the proposal was now put forward under the Bill that Quarter Sessions were to be excluded from an appellate jurisdiction, which, it was universally admitted, they had exercised with much efficiency during the past few years. His hon. friend beside him had asked whether or not it was the view of the Government and of hon. Members opposite that Quarter Sessions had efficiently discharged their functions in the past few years. Surely, in the absence of any hon. Members getting up and saying that Quarter Sessions had performed their duties either inefficiently or unfairly, he was entitled to say that there was a universal consensus of opinion that Quarter Sessions had discharged their duties both efficiently and fairly in the past few years. What had been the extent of interference by Quarter Sessions with the decisions of the Benches below? That was a very important point in deciding whether their functions should be continued. In the year 1905, 891 licences were referred to the various Quarter Sessions of the country. Of those 891, there were 519 refused, so that in about 400 cases Quarter Sessions were unable to take the view which had been taken by the justices in the Court below, and in those 400 cases a longer lease of life was given to the licences affected. If they took 1906, the number of licences referred was 2,045. Of those 1,575 were refused by Quarter Sessions, so that in about 500 cases the appeal was allowed. In 1907, the number of licences referred was 1,825, and in 1,219 cases the licence was refused. So that in 1907 there were about 600 cases in which appeal from the lower Court was successful. What was the proposition which was advanced on the other side of the House as justifying the destruction of an appellate body, which during these last three years in so many cases had shown a discretion which had not been impeached by argument in the course of the discussion which had taken place on the Amendment? He ventured to submit to the Committee the view that the Quarter Sessions were a very much better tribunal for the purpose of dealing with these matters than the justices of the Court below. It was felt to be a very great anomaly indeed that while, quite properly, persons interested directly or indirectly in the liquor trade were debarred from sitting on the licensing Benches, it very frequently happened that teetotallers, who had the strongest possible view as to the propriety of granting licences, were members of the Bench. It was extremely unlikely that magistrates who belonged to vigilance committees, and who shared the views which were embodied in this Bill, who would introduce local option or absolute prohibition to-morrow if they had the power, would bring to bear on the specific cases that came before them that judicial temper which Lord Halsbury, in the case of "Sharpe and Wakefield," said it was the duty of licensing justices to display. In Quarter Sessions, representing a wider area, they were likely to bring to bear a far less prejudiced judgment than in the case of the ordinary justices, and that was the explanation why in so many cases the discretion of the justices in the Court below had been interfered with by Quarter Sessions. It was far easier to destroy than to build up. They had at present an efficient tribunal in the Court below, and an efficient appellate tribunal. They had chosen, for no adequate reason which had been stated or which by any argument could be defended, to destroy at once the appellate tribunal, and that destruction would be construed by those who would be affected by it as a deliberate design to prevent them enjoying what almost all litigants, however small the amount in dispute, enjoyed as a right.

*MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) said he was sorry that every Member opposite who had spoken had felt it necessary to suppose that in taking one side or the other they were passing judgment on the respective merits, as an administrative or judicial body, of Quarter Sessions or licensing justices. He did not think there was any reflection on Quarter Sessions in the proposal which the Government had made. The functions which the local licensing Benches would have to perform were quite different from those which Quarter Sessions performed under the Act of 1904, and he supposed everyone would admit that for some purposes Quarter Sessions were best and for the others local licensing justices were the best. He really could not conceive how anyone considering the system apart from all the controversies that had raged about it could doubt that for the purposes of the local reduction which was to be carried out, the licensing justices, with full knowledge of the local conditions, were a better body than Quarter Sessions could possibly be. Hon. Members opposite forgot the history of the licensing question. By an Act of George II. licensing justices were appointed to act locally expressly on the ground that the Quarter Sessions justices, acting at a distance, were ignorant of local conditions. The Government were simply doing what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University said they ought to do and giving those who knew control in the matter. The essential principles of the licensing system were carried out by giving to the local justices full power in this, which was after all an administrative matter.

SIR E. CARSON (Dublin University) said one observation made by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Spen Valley was entirely inaccurate, and he rather gathered that the Prime Minister's mind ran in something of the same groove. The observation was that the only reason that Quarter Sessions were retained as the licensing authority under the Bill of 1904 was for the purpose of the distribution of compensation.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: I did not make that observation. I said "the only reason that made it tolerable"; I did not say it was the only reason for appointing them.

SIR E. CARSON said the right hon. Baronet went on to say that the reason now was not going to exist. Quarter Sessions were retained for the simple reason that up to 1904 there had always been an appeal to Quarter Sessions in every case in which a licence was refused. They saw no reason, either then or now, for taking away that appeal, and up to the present none had been suggested. Why on earth should they, in extinguishing a man's property, take away the right of appeal, and leave it when taking away property under the Act of 1870, because that was what they were doing? They were allowing the right of appeal to continue if the property was being taken away for misconduct and were allowing no right of appeal to exist if a licence had been taken away without any misconduct. Surely there never was a more ridiculous proposition.

MR. LEIF JONES: He receives compensation.

SIR E. CARSON asked if that was a reason why he ought not to have a right of appeal. Did the hon. Gentleman think he was going to get adequate compensation? Did the hon. Gentleman think it made no difference to him whether his licence was taken away or not? Of course he did not, and that was rather an ill-considered interruption. They were not going to give a man an equivalent for what they were taking away from him, which was the only kind of compensation that he understood. Where public-houses were taken for public purposes—and this was a pretence of taking it for a public purpose—there was an award and an appeal from the award to a jury. If they set up a tribunal of that kind they might talk of compensation. But under this Bill the whole thing was a sham. It was not the magistrates or Quarter Sessions who were the ultimate tribunal, but the paid officers of the Government. Let them put away cant and face the real matter. What was the justification for abolishing the right of appeal? What they really wanted to do was to hurry the matter up, and get rid of these fellows as quickly as possible, and to have no millstones round their necks. They were quite willing at the commencement of the debate to interject cheers and inarticulate observations about Quarter Sessions, but when challenged they went back and said Quarter Sessions were the most respectable people in the whole world, and they could not criticise them. Then why were they taking away the appeal from Quarter Sessions if it was not for the purpose of hurrying the matter up, and doing the thing in a perfunctory kind of way, and getting rid of these people's property at the lowest possible price? The hon. Member talked of the value of local knowledge, but Quarter Sessions would have the report of the local justices and would have representatives of the local justices on the Bench. All this pretence of the great superiority of the local justices had nothing to do with the case. The truth was that they were taking away the appeal, and that was what he objected to. He had not had much experience of these appeals since the Act of 1904, but he had had one painful one, where but for the appeal an injustice of the greatest enormity would have been done. But the whole bench of forty-six magistrates unanimously reversed what had been most deliberately and wilfully done. The existence of such a state of affairs as that, if they wanted to deal fairly with the trade they were going to destroy, ought to be a sufficient argument to prevent them in this haphazard, easygoing fashion, taking this right away. No case was made out for this drastic change in the whole procedure of the licensing law of the country, and he hoped some real substantial reason would be given.

MR. ASQUITH: The only purpose for which I rise is to point out that the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not seem to appreciate what is the real question before the Committee. He has talked about the right of appeal and about compensation. He has vindicated Quarter Sessions from charges which certainly I have never made against them, and in making that vindication he has attacked the local justices, who, to the best of my belief, like Quarter Sessions, perform their duty in the matter admirably, and on the whole efficiently. But none of these things have any relevance whatever to the question before the Committee: What does the clause do? I think I had better read it.

> "Licensing justices shall, in accordance with this Act, reduce the number of on-licences in their district so that, at the end of a certain time, the number shall bear a certain correspondence to the population."

That is the clause. In other words, Parliament here is imposing a mandatory duty upon a particular body. There is no question of discretion of any sort or kind. They have to carry out what Parliament requires them to do. I should have thought it would have been regarded rather as a compliment to the Quarter Sessions than otherwise that this purely administrative function should be imposed upon the licensing justices of the district. Under the Act of 1904 it was totally different. I agree under that Act Quarter Sessions had a very real and delicate discretion, because it rested with them whether or not a particular reduction should take place. Under this Bill the reduction is compulsory and made by Act of Parliament, and the whole function of a discretionary kind which the licensing justices will have to discharge is whether this or that house should prevail. It is the question whether the "Red Lion" or the "Black Bull" should be a victim. Are not the people who are on the spot and know all the circumstances a more convenient and on the whole a more equitable tribunal? I ask the Committee to decide in the way suggested by the Government.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I think the right hon. Gentleman will see that he really has not met the particular point or two points which we have raised, and which really are material to the decision of this question. The first is a point of justice, the second is a point of administration. With regard to the point of justice the right hon. Gentleman lays it down as an almost self-evident proposition that if there is a statutory requirement for any body, be it Quarter Sessions or the local licensing benches, to make a reduction of a certain number of licences in a certain district, no question of individual rights can arise, that no individual wrongs can be performed, and that therefore there is no real reason for having an appeal to another tribunal at all. Is that the fact? The right hon. Gentleman says it does not matter whether the "Black Bull" or the "Red Lion" is in question. It matters very much to the licensee.

MR. ASQUITH: I never said anything of the kind. I said that in determining the question whether one or other of these houses has to go, the licensing justices were better and more equitable.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman's contention is that no right of jurisdiction so given to the licensing justices involves questions of personal right. If he does not hold that view, if he thinks there is a question of personal rights and property involved, why is he going to refuse in these questions the privilege of an appeal which is given in every other case in which the question of property or personal rights are involved? Of course, if it is merely an administrative point that no injustice can be done by the licensing justices, I agree that there is no need for an appeal. But, quite clearly, where there is a choice between depriving "A." or "B." of some of their rights, and where there may be prejudices in the exercise of the judgment of the licensing magistrates, then you ought to give "A." or "B." the right of appeal to some superior tribunal. What answer has the right hon. Gentleman given to that contention? The argument put forward is that under all the series of statutes which regulate our licensing laws, when you take a man's property away hitherto you have always given him the right of appeal. In this Bill and for the first time you are allowing the local people to deprive a man of his property, and you are giving that man no appeal. I think both sides of the House will agree, whether that argument be a good one or a bad one, no answer has been given. No attempt has been made to meet the point. But there is another point, which I call the administrative point, on which I do not think quite enough has been said in the course of this debate. The whole plan of your Bill is to diminish the number of licences until they bear a certain proportion to the total population. What are to be the areas taken into account when that diminution is made? The right hon. Gentleman in his speech laid it down that it was quite clear that the small area, and not the large area is the proper one to be dealt with; and that, therefore, it is not Quarter Sessions who ought to deal with it, but the magistrates who live in the smaller areas. In my opinion, it is the larger area that ought to be taken into account, and from that point of view alone—leaving out the question of judicial equity—Quarter Sessions ought to have the say in the matter. I do not think I should be in order in discussing whether the proportion of licences to population should be estimated in the small area or the big area. That will come up on a subsequent Amendment. I will assume, for the sake of argument, that the proportion is to be maintained in each small area, making up a Quarter Sessions district. I think it is a bad plan. I will assume for the moment it is the right plan, and I will say, even if it is the right plan, it is the Quarter Sessions, who know the larger area, and not the licensing justices, who know the smaller area, who ought to determine which public-house ought to be destroyed. Clearly the justices in the small area merely consider the needs of the small area and the public-house in the small area. They do not consider the public-houses on the borders of their area. It is only Quarter Sessions who can take a general view of all the small areas that should decide, having in view not merely what happens in each area, but what is going to happen in each area, taken in connection with what is happening in the neighbouring areas. How are you to distribute the public-houses which are to be preserved? The right hon. Gentleman I do not think has dealt with that at all. Surely it is a point that ought to weigh with every Member in the House who wishes that the public-houses which are left should be so arranged in the area as to meet the needs of the people. If you want to consult the convenience of the country districts I think the Government arrangement is very foolish. I think, putting aside altogether the question of equity, leaving wholly apart the question of whether it is right for the first time to allow a man's property to be taken away from him without appeal—I would ask the Prime Minister, as responsible for the framing of an administrative Bill, whether he does not think his own object would be far better served by allowing the elimination of public-houses to be dealt with by an authority which has under its conspectus and control all the smaller areas in which the proportion of licences is to be reduced on some uniform rate between population and licences. These are two arguments upon which I rest the vote which I will certainly give without the smallest hesitation. I think the arguments are entirely on the side of the change we recommend. When I remember that after the discussion upon the position of the magistrates in relation to Quarter Sessions had gone on for, I think, two or three days on the Bill of 1904, the present Prime Minister declared that the subject was not half exhausted, I cannot help thinking that a little further discussion on this point would really prove, what I think hon. Gentlemen opposite are beginning to see, that the change we recommend does not touch the substance of the Bill, or points that may be regarded as vital by the authors of the Bill, but does, undoubtedly, conduce to a maintenance of those ordinary principles of justice and equity which this House ought to maintain, and will most unquestionably make the administrative work of the Bill far fairer to the populations whose needs are to be served by the public-houses to be left than the rather crude patchwork system the Government are proposing.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said the Committee would remember what took place before 1904. The licensing justices all over the county were taking licences away simply because they were redundant, and not because of misconduct. What happened? The licence-holders appealed to Quarter Sessions, and Quarter Sessions in almost every case, after hearing the evidence, reversed the decision, and restored the licence to the licence-holder. If it had not been for that appeal these licence-holders would have been deprived of their property without compensation. Quarter Sessions had done justice in the past, and if their jurisdiction was maintained they would do justice in the future.

Mr. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) said there was one point which seemed to have been forgotten. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley, who said that Quarter Sessions hung like a millstone round the neck of temperance reformers, forgot that he was dealing with past years, before the justices were entitled to give compensation, whereby they could reduce licences without doing injustice. The Prime Minister had given as his reason for refusing to accept the Amendment that he desired to have more local knowledge. Then why did he set up as a court of appeal in certain matters, though not in this, a tribunal which had no local knowledge whatever? A second reason the Prime Minister gave was that it was desirable to keep to small areas. In small areas it was quite conceivable that in one there would be an excessive number of licences in proportion to the population, while in an adjoining area there might be considerably less than the proportion sanctioned under the Bill. Was there not a stronger reason operating in the mind of the Government? There was no doubt that these small bodies of licensing justices would be very much more easily dealt with by the Licensing Commission than would Quarter Sessions with all the authority which lay behind them, which would not be so easily brought to book as the smaller body of men who constituted the licensing justices. That, he believed, was the reason why the Government would not accept the Amendment. The Prime Minister said it was absolutely necessary that they should have local knowledge. He would like to remind hon. Members who so loudly condemned Quarter Sessions that the licensing committee which dealt with these cases was composed of representatives of every petty sessional area in the district. Such a committee had not only local knowledge, but local knowledge combined with broad views. He hoped the Government would be able to give some stronger and better reasons before they asked the Committee to reject the Amendment.

*Mr. G. D. FABER (York) said the Prime Minister had stated that the duties to be performed by the licensing justices would be purely ministerial. Was that the view of the hon. Member for Westmoreland, who, when addressing the United Kingdom Alliance last October, said—

> "Let us restore the power to the licensing justices. When we have done that we can go forward, and give the people the right to deal with this question for themselves. Under the Act of 1904 discretion was taken away from the licensing justices."

Surely, in view of these words, the hon. Member could not hold that the licensing justices were to perform a merely ministerial office. The real power behind the throne were apparently to be the gentlemen named in Clause 1.

*The CHAIRMAN: This is really not relevant to the Amendment.

*Mr. G. D. FABER said the Prime Minister based his argument in favour of these duties being placed upon the licensing justices rather than Quarter Sessions upon the fact that the duties would be purely ministerial. If that view were correct it was against everything that had been said by the Radical Party in the country. He thought the Prime Minister was wrong—it was not going to be a purely ministerial function that the local justices would have to perform. It was perfectly true that they would have to reduce a certain number of licenses in a certain number of years. As far as that went it was merely ministerial, but they would have to decide which houses were to be taken away, and which were to be left—"Some shall be taken and others left." It struck him that that made all the difference in the world; that was by no means a purely ministerial function. It would rest with the local justices to decide whether a house was to receive what the Government called compensation during fourteen years, or whether it should be allowed to exist until the end of fourteen years, and then be annihilated. It was not merely the question whether the "White Lion" or the "Blue Bear" should be taken away—they had to consider the question of the living of the man who was in the house and the convenience of the parties who used the houses—matters of vital importance. Surely it was desirable that questions of this kind should be dealt with on reference, by a larger tribunal, Quarter Sessions, who would be outside the sphere of local prejudice. The Amendment affirmed that the local justices should collect all the intelligence and that then the matter should be referred to the Quarter Sessions for determination. That seemed to him a course based on common-sense and on justice. He hoped the Prime Minister would see his way to accept the Amendment.

SIR JOHN RANDLES (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said the Prime Minister had stated that the question whether the "Blue Lion" or the "Red Bull" should be the victim should be left to the people on the spot, who had knowledge of the locality, and the circumstances. But the point of the objection to that procedure consisted largely in the fact that it was not the animal itself which would be treated, but the house, and it was the colour of the animal which would cause difficulty to the local magistrates. It often happened that in the country districts, public-houses were called by the names of blue and red animals, and each of these colours was favoured by people of certain political parties. The "Red Bull" was very ofen the Radical public-house, and it might be that the bench which would not be a Radical bench in that particular area, might decide that it should be abolished. In that way a grievance would be set up on account of the "Red Bull" being disestablished, while the "Blue Lion" got all the customers. That would be a difficult position for the magistrates, and in the interest of the districts themselves he thought if the Prime Minister took into account the real feeling of the local magistrates, he would see that, in view of this difficulty, there was reason for accepting the Amendment. It might be that the local magistrates, having prejudices, would try to please all the licence holders in one part of their area, while their action in other parts would give rise to grievances. There might be all kinds of difficulties present to the minds of the magistrates, and, therefore, he thought the Amendment should be accepted, so that they might be relieved in some measure of the responsibility of deciding on the relative merits of licensed houses.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said the Prime Minister had told the Committee that it was quite unnecessary to put in Quarter Sessions because the local justices would have to carry out an express direction given to them by this House to reduce licences in their districts, until they bore a certain fixed proportion to the population. He was rather led to fear that the Prime Minister had not read the schedule in the Bill. If he had read it, he would have known that the licensing justices had not merely to carry out an express direction, but that they would exercise most difficult and wide discretion. Under this schedule it would be the duty of the local justices not merely woodenly to reduce the licences in accordance with population, but to decide whether the strict application of the scale was or was not expedient owing to the isolated position of any licensed premises, or to the fact that the premises or any of them were constructed, fitted, or intended to be used in good faith for any purpose to which the holding of an on-licence was merely auxiliary. The justices would have to decide whether the population of any place within their district as shown by the Census did or did not represent the population for whom on-licences might be required, by reason of the resort thereto of a larger number of persons than that shown in the Census during special seasons of the year, or special times of the day, or for any other reason. It was not really the case, as the right hon. Gentleman said it was, that the justices were to carry out a hard and fast mandatory duty. It was a discretion; and that discretion would have to be supervised to some extent. Who was to supervise them? Who was to say whether the local justices were doing their duty under this Bill, unless it were those three great men in London? But surely on questions of that kind the proper authority was not three gentlemen sitting in London, but the licensing committee of the county. It was not true to say that they had not local knowledge. The right hon. Gentleman said that the licensing justices consisted almost universally of gentlemen appointed from the various districts of the county; but inasmuch as the local justices had to administer questions of discretion, unless that discretion was to be left entirely to them, it was ridiculous to say that they had to appeal to those three gentlemen in London, and that that was equally good as an appeal to Quarter Sessions of the county in which the licences existed. Apart from all other considerations, as a pure matter of administration, Quarter Sessions ought to have the final decision.

Captain FABER (Hampshire, Andover) supported the Amendment because he thought it was better to go to Quarter Sessions for a final appeal on this matter. Every social and personal pressure that could be brought to bear on the local justices would be brought to bear on them. He was one of those who did not think it desirable that those connected with breweries or the trade should sit on the licensing Bench, but he was also of opinion that those who were ardent teetotallers should not sit on the licensing Bench either. It was a position for moderate men. In his own part of the world he had seen justices committed up to the hilt to teetotal principles—and he had many good friends amongst them—but he objected to their sitting as licensing justices. They all knew that the Prime Minister was possessed of a judicial mind, and believed him to have a just mind, and he asked him why there should not be an appeal from the local Bench to Quarter Sessions?

Mr. H. C. LEA said that so far as he had heard no mention had been yet made of the ante-1869 beer-houses. Suppose one or two licenses in a district were to be extinguished, and among them was an ante-1869 beerhouse, it would, in his opinion, be well within the functions of a Court of Appeal to decide whether the beerhouse should be the first to be extinguished in order that the keeper might secure compensation under the Act of 1904. It was well known that prior to that Act the ante-1869 beerhouses were freeholds, and the magistrates had no jurisdiction over them as to renewal. He should support the Amendment in order to secure an appeal in the event of an unfair decision in such a case.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR wanted to know what the exact effect of the Amendment would be in county boroughs where the functions of Quarter Sessions were now exercised by the whole body of justices. Did the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment propose to transfer to the whole bench in Quarter Sessions the powers now possessed in county boroughs? Why did he propose to take away the jurisdiction from the county boroughs now exercised by them?

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he understood that the effect of the Amendment would be that the decision now given by the local justices would have to be confirmed by Quarter Sessions; but in county boroughs the County Quarter Sessions would not come in. That disposed of the argument of the hon. Member for East Toxteth. He asked the Prime Minister why the decision of the local justices should not require confirmation? So far as he knew, in practically every case any decision given by the local justices was liable to be appealed. Now, in this particular case, when local justices were going to take away a man's livelihood from him, why was no confirmation of their decision to be required? The Prime Minister said he had nothing whatever to say against Quarter Sessions, but he declared that the local justices were better acquainted with the merits of the "Black Bull" or the "Red Lion," because they had better opportunities of seeing them. The right hon. Gentleman was in error. The vast majority of the local justices were not in daily or hourly attendance at the "Black Bull" or "Red Lion." There might be one or two of them who had particular knowledge of the public-houses in their own village, but the local justices had to consider the public-houses in various villages outside their own particular area. Therefore, he contended, the argument of the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken. The argument of the hon. Member for Appleby had been completely demolished by his hon. friend, and he need not say anything further about it. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley said that this matter should be left to the local justices, because there was a national fund to compensate for the extinguished licences. But the fund came not from the nation, but from the trade. This was the first time that he had heard a fund provided by the trade being described as a national fund. If the teetotal people were to have their tea shops taken away from them and they were compensated for that, would they call it a national fund if the money was derived from the other tea-shops? Hence, he maintained that this was not a national fund. But granted that it was a national fund, the administration of it should go to the higher Court of Quarter Sessions, and not to a small petty local Court. Therefore, the argument of the right hon. Gentleman in that respect had no weight. Now they came to the "millstone" argument, which had some weight in it, at any rate. The right hon. Gentleman said that those local justices who shared his extreme opinions would not have a fair and impartial tribunal to revise their decisions, but he thought that they should not be able to exercise their partiality in a way that was not right in the public interest, or for the benefit of those unfortunate people who had invested their money in a legal and justifiable occupation. Therefore, under all these circumstances, as they had heard no argument worth listening to from hon. Gentlemen opposite in contravention of the Amendment, he should have great pleasure in voting for it.

Mr. F. E. SMITH said that the answer to the hon. Member for Toxteth was to be found in the provision of Section 8 of the Act of 1904. The point of that section was that where they were dealing with county boroughs the whole body of the local justices would discharge the functions discharged in other cases by Quarter Sessions. Should the sense of the Committee be against this Amendment, of course, it would be idle to put down substantive Amendments to deal with the county boroughs, but should the sense of the Committee be in favour of this Amendment, then it would be necessary to do so.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR thanked the hon. Member for his explanation.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) thought that the Amendment and the debate upon it had shown how completely the Prime Minister and the Government had given themselves into the hands of the extreme teetotallers. It was lamentable to see the manner in which they had surrendered themselves to a fraction of a fraction of the 18,000,000 adults of England and Wales. That small but well organised fraction of the people were, it seemed, to rule the comforts and liberties of the nation. Although the discussion in the House was very one-sided owing to the determination, or the order that had gone forth to hon. Gentlemen opposite, to be silent, he would remind the Committee that the matter would have to be discussed in the constituencies. This discussion was good, because it revealed one strong instance of the many instances of injustice with which the Bill was associated. What was to be the composition of the licensing committees? They all knew that in the past members of the extreme temperance party, as they called themselves, tried and tried successfully to get on these licensing committees, and this was very germane to the question because the publicans whose property was to be taken away could not be represented on those committees at all. The people whose desire was to take away this property were represented, and so partial were they in some cases that in the case of the Birmingham Licensing Committee its indiscretions were so great that the magistrates had to meet and change the chairman and reconstitute the committee. What help could license-holders expect from committees composed in that way to help them to retain their property and to see that it should not be unjustly dealt with? He thought the Prime Minister would do well to accept this Amendment, because it would be difficult to justify his refusal of it either to the House or to the country.

***Mr. GRETTON** (Rutland) in answering the question put by an hon. Member with regard to the position of Quarter Sessions in county boroughs, said the Act of 1904 as regarded reductions and compensation set up the whole body of the justices of the borough to perform that duty. The licensing justices were controlled by the Quarter Sessions in the counties, but not in the towns. That section he understood would still hold good. Supposing the Amendment were carried, there would be no change in the appeal to Quarter Sessions in the matter of compensation. He thought there was a good case made with regard to the exercise of discretion on the part of licensing magistrates, and a strong case for appeals when necessary. Not so long ago the right hon. Member for Spen Valley and his friends pointed out how partially in their opinion the licensing magistrates acted in the administration of the law, and some Members actually accused the licensing benches of corruption in their administration. Apparently they had now forgotten those tirades and charges, and said the licensing justices could now be entrusted to carry out this scheme fairly. The licensing magistrates would be very pliable bodies, easily bent to the will of the Commission, and they were to say who was to go and who to remain without there being any appeal whatever. While the Government and their friends by this conspiracy of silence failed to show any reason why this change was to be made in the law, the people outside would know and understand what was meant by it, and would rightly suspect that the Government and their friends kept silence because they had no adequate or reasonable arguments to adduce.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 126; Noes, 299. (Division List No. 202.)

AYES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Barrie, H. T.(Londonderry, N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R.(Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt Hn J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence (Kent,Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope,James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.)
Lockwood, Rt.H.Lt.-Col. A.R.
Long, Col. CharlesW.(Evesham
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin,S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M‘Arthur, Charles
M‘Iver, Sir Lewis
M‘Killop, W.
Magnus, Sir Philip

Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim,N)
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Dowd, John
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Stanley,Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York,E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES —Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
gnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Ambrose, Robert
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(Montgomery Co)
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies,Sir W.Howell(Bristol,S)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W. H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt Hn SirW.Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb,Edmund G.(Leominster)
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Leese,Sir JosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David

Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A.W.H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh Central)
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, WalterRussell(Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs)
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M.(Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw,Charles Edw.(Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley,Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Teannnt, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne,G. R.(Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,Rt Hn.SirThomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York,W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) moved the first of a series of Amendments designed to provide that the duties imposed by the clause should be discharged by a committee selected by the justices of a licensing district from their own number, provided that no justice shall be qualified to act on such committee who is a member or subscriber to any society or organisation having among its objects the suppression or prohibition of the sale by retail of intoxicating liquors, or who has publicly stated or professed his desire that licences for the sale by retail of intoxicating liquor should not continue to exist." [MINISTERIAL laughter, and OPPOSITION cries of "Order."] He gathered from the inarticulate sounds on the opposite side of the House that some hon. Members regarded that as an Amendment that in itself was not possible, but he moved it in a most serious spirit, in order to do something to mitigate, although it would not altogether remove, a grievance which was very seriously felt all over the country. The present state of the law was that if a justice had any pecuniary interest, however slight or remote, in the continued existence of a licence, he was not allowed to sit on the licensing Bench. Indeed, it has been carried to such a point—he believed he was right, though he had not looked into the cases—that it had been held that a shareholder in a railway company could not sit in a case where the licence of a railway refreshment room was in question. [AN HON. MEMBER: That is changed.]. His hon. friend reminded him that that was changed in 1902. He ventured to say that it was an utterly absurd and ridiculous condition of the law. In dealing with such a subject as this, was it really supposed by any hon. Member opposite that a trifling pecuniary interest in the licensed trade unfitted a man to judge impartially when the question of a licence came up, and that a gentleman holding the view, he would not say of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley, but a view compared with which his was moderation itself, was perfectly entitled to sit and judge of this very question? It was manifest that such a condition of affairs would produce the grossest injustice, the grossest infringement of the rule in favour of impartiality that could possibly be imagined. Why, at that very moment, he understood that a case was in process of appeal where the facts were, he believed, that members of a vigilance committee who themselves had promoted the objection to a licence subsequently sat on the Bench and adjudicated upon that licence. In the present condition of the law, it was very doubtful whether the decision of the Bench under those circumstances was good or bad. He did not propose to make any general alteration of the law, but he did say that in reference to these new powers which were to be given to the justices by Section 1, and which were explained by a later section, it was right that the House of Commons should say that only those should be entrusted with those powers who had not pledged themselves to be partial. It had been said in the debate that afternoon that very little was entrusted to the discretion of the justices under the Bill. He did not think that was true. If hon. Members turned to Clause 6 of the Bill, they would see what a very large measure of discretion was entrusted to the justices under that clause, because it was provided that justices were to be subject, of course, to the control of the Committee of Three, who sat in London. They were to provide a scheme, and each scheme—

> "Shall show as respects each rural parish and urban area in the district the effect of the scheduled scale as applied to the parish or area, and provide for the statutory reduction being distributed reasonably over the reduction period, having regard to the circumstances of the district, and show the manner in which the reduction is to be so distributed."

Then they were to revise that scheme, and generally control the whole administration of the scheme. If hon. Members would consider for a moment, they would see what a tremendous power that gave to the justices. They were entitled to say about any licensed house that it should cease to exist, and that with a compensation which was always admitted to be ridiculously unfair. That was a tremendous power to give to any body of men. To entrust to men the power of fining their fellow-subjects large sums of money, not for any misdeed of theirs, but because the trade which they carried on did not meet with the approval of the majority of the present House of Commons, was a strong order, and it became essentially necessary to take such precautions as they could against the undue exercise of that power. It might be said that his Amendment was a novel proposal, but it was not so. It existed in Australia, and, he believed, in Canada. They had been constantly, on the Old-Age Pensions Bill, referred by right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite to the example of the Colonies, and he invited them, on this occasion, to follow the example of the Colonies, as they did in regard to the example which they thought so admirable in the case of old-age pensions. Even if it were a novel proposal, he would not be frightened by such an argument as that. The truth of this licensing question was that they had to deal with a very exceptional state of circumstances. There was no part of our administrative machinery which excited more violent party passions. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh!"] Hon. Members must indeed be sunk in self-deception if they thought otherwise. Everybody knew that the licensing question did excite violent party passions, which existed in every quarter of the House, and in every part of the kingdom. Therefore it was quite right even if there were no precedent to adopt that novel principle in order to guard against a novel and exceptional danger. He appealed to the Committee and the Government to consider favourably his suggestion, which was made in perfect seriousness, honesty and straightforwardness, and with a desire to make the provisions of the Bill as little burdensome and intolerable as from their nature it was possible they should be.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, at beginning, to insert the words 'A committee of the.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): I regret that the Government cannot recommend the Committee to accept the Amendment. What is it that the noble Lord asks for? He suggests that a new test should be instituted, not on the appointment of magistrates, but on the permission for a magistrate to exercise particular functions under Clause 1 of the Bill. If the test were of any value at all it ought to apply to magistrates on all occasions when sitting as licensing justices.

LORD R. CECIL: As soon as the principle has been established in this case it would be no doubt extended.

MR. McKENNA: The noble Lord does not do that here, because it would not be in order, and instead of waiting until it would be in order, he proposes now to institute this test on the exercise of the magistrate's functions in this particular case only. All the magistrates have to do is to decide which of a certain number of houses are to be taken, and they prepare a scheme, which must go before the Licensing Commission for confirmation. That of all functions, I should suggest, is the one occasion when any bias which the magistrate might feel would not be exercised. The noble Lord did not suggest that magistrates had personal bias against particular licensed victuallers, but a general bias against all licensed victuallers. In this case the suggested bias would have no influence and the test that he suggests would be entirely illusory. If the magistrate subscribes or openly professes certain opinions, he is to be debarred from acting on the committee, but if he is strong but silent and thrifty he is not to be debarred from acting. If he does not subscribe because he is thrifty and does not express his opinions because he is silent, but is nevertheless very determined to be biassed, the noble Lord does not touch him. Therefore this, like so many other tests, would prove in practice to be altogether illusory. For these reasons the Government recommend the Committee not to accept the Amendment.

MR. F. E. SMITH said that if the right hon. Gentleman had paid the hon. Member for Norwood the compliment of listening to his observations on the last Amendment he would have known that there was a very wide and important area within which the freedom from bias of these justices was of the very first importance. Let him recommend the right hon. Gentleman once again to give his attention to the first schedule of the Bill and the modifications which were of the very first importance—which were entirely in the hands of the justices. The modifications might be made on the direct application of the scale as followed—

"Where the number of on-licences in any such parish or area does not exceed two, and it appears inexpedient to reduce the number below two."

That, he agreed, was not one of the more important instances. The next was—

"Where the strict application of the scale appears in the special circumstances of the case to be inexpedient owing to the isolated position of any licensed premises in the parish or area."

The third was the most important of all—

"Where it appears that the population of any place, being a rural parish or urban area, or part of an urban parish or urban area as shown by the Census does not represent the population for whom on-licences may be required by reason of the resort thereto of a larger number of persons than that shown in the Census during special seasons of the year, or special times of the day, or for any other reason."

Could the House conceive a wider discretion committed to licensing justices than the right to decide whether for any other reason modifications should be introduced in other cases than those mentioned in the schedule? He desired to speak with profound respect of the three Members of the House whom he would name, and he invited the Committee to consider for instance what view the Members for Spen Valley, Westmoreland, and Lincolnshire would be likely to take sitting as licensing justices if this particular modification was brought before them. He should insult them—he should ruin their unsullied reputation as moral reformers—if he suggested for a moment that they would permit one of these modifications. They were men who were notoriously poisoned by their views: [Cries of "Oh."] He said deliberately that a man who was a prohibitionist and pretended that he was going to consider on its merits a proposal which was made to him and which was inconsistent with the theory of prohibition so far as that particular application was concerned was poisoned by his views. He was utterly unable to bring a fair and judicial mind to bear on the consideration, whether or not an application should be granted. Let the Committee make up their minds as to what were the broad principles upon which disqualifications for magistrates were to be based. At least upon one side the House had previously in many similar discussions made up its mind with all imaginable clearness as to what the principle was and it was this. If they were interested in any shares of a licensed company however remote that interest the presumption was that they were not in a position to bring to bear upon the consideration of a particular case that absolute impartiality of mind which the State had a right to demand of those who were discharging quasi-judicial duties. Did the Committee pretend that men who held that all licences ought to end and that no new licences under any circumstances should be granted, could bring a judicial mind to bear on the specific proposals before them? The thing was a farce. If it was indeed the desire of the Committee that licensed victuallers should have justice, let them see that those who were the bitter and avowed enemies of licensed victuallers were excluded from the Bench. If it was the intention of the Committee to destroy licensed victuallers, unless they happened to be destroyed first, then by all means reject this Amendment and keep on the Bench as many men as they could possibly collect together who were pledged under all circumstances and whatever the argument might be to grant no licences. Let them do this if they liked, but let them cease to describe the process as justice and to describe the officials who would administer it as judicial in their character.

*SIR GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.) said the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down was one of the best illustrations they could take of the unfair way in which such an Amendment would act. He supposed no one could say that the hon. Gentleman had not at least an indirect interest in the trade they were discussing, and yet unless he was a shareholder and an advocate of the trade he was no doubt one who could not be excluded from the Bench. Yet he desired to exclude those who had no pecuniary interest whatever in the question, but took it up on the ground of morals. [Cries of "Oh, oh."] Perhaps the hon. Gentlemen would define on what other ground they could take it up. If this Amendment meant anything, it meant that the magistrates who did not habitually take strong drink were incapable of exercising a judicial mind upon any question which affected the interests of the drink trade in the community, and that after having taken the oath to administer the law, they were either unwilling or incapable of administering the law, because of their personal habits. To apply such a test as this was absolutely unknown, and he ventured to say that, by the majority of the community it would be received with ridicule. Were they to presume in this age that a glass of beer was necessary to a judicial mind? That was the outcome of the Amendment. He thought it was a legitimate inference to draw that unless one was in practice the consumer of a certain amount of strong drink, he was not able to form an opinion and not able, indeed, to carry out the law which he had taken the oath to administer. A short time ago, in discussing a previous Amendment, it was said that the bulk of the local justices were teetotallers and the bulk of county justices were drinkers, but he thought it would be found that the teetotallers were not confined to one class of magistrates or the other. He was quite sure he could produce many advocates before local and county benches who would say that they would rather present those cases to a mixed bench, containing amongst others those who were abstainers, than they would to a bench who were all moderate drinkers. The question as to whether a man was opposed to the existence of the drink trade in its present conditions was not one which should bias his judgment in deciding on those cases which came before the bench. He could bring abundant evidence to show that many barristers who practised before the benches were willing to testify to the judicial character and bearing of those who had very strong views upon this drink business. He could give the noble Lord a testimonial in regard to himself from the leading Conservative paper of his district as to the way in which he had exercised his judicial functions in regard to the licensing question. His own was not an isolated case, and he was quite sure that whatever were their views upon the drink custom of society, when they took their position on the magistrates' Bench they never allowed their personal views to influence their judgment against the trade, and they gave their judgment according to the law. To assume for a moment that it was necessary that they should abstain from subscribing to temperance societies or to a society which had for its foundation the prohibition of the drink traffic was a doctrine which it was too late to advocate in the twentieth century. He hoped the House would reject the Amendment by a large majority, otherwise they would have to have a test applied to the other side. He did not mean so much those who had a direct pecuniary interest in the trade, but they would have to see how far those who sat on the Bench were qualified in other ways, and inquire whether their habits had led them to excess upon any occasion. [Cries of "Name."] Of course, one test was quite as fair as the other, and if the Opposition were going to begin tests the one which they proposed would no be the only one which would have to be applied to the qualification for those gentlemen who would be called upon to exercise judicial functions in this matter. Those who sat upon licensing Benches and expressed their views freely upon the temperance question outside were always extremely careful in this matter, and they were quite as competent to form a judgment as those who, perhaps from one cause or another, attempted to build up the drink traffic and maintain it in its present position. He submitted that this Amendment was not necessary, and the House ought to indignantly reject it.

*MR. GOULDING (Worcester) said he rose to support the Amendment which had been moved by his hon. friend. This was no new question. There was an obligation on Parliament to remove all doubts as to the impartial administration of the law. There should be absolute and complete confidence by the public in regard to the tribunal, and also by the individual whose case had to be adjudicated upon. Rightly those who had pecuniary interest in the liquor trade were excluded from the licensing Bench. He asked the Prime Minister how could he possibly expect a magistrate who believed that the drink traffic was wrong, and who spent most of his time in advocating the aims of a society to suppress the liquor trade, who believed that most of the crime of the country was the result of the sale of intoxicating liquor, to adjudicate on the licensing Bench without bias. They were going to reduce the number of justices. They might all be of the same way of thinking, and, therefore, to ask a publican to go into court and appeal to individuals saturated with such opinions would be a mockery. An individual so biassed put himself in such a position that discretion with him was an absolute impossibility. It was not asked that an ordinary temperance man should be excluded from the bench, but those who advocated the suppression of the liquor traffic. In Australia and Canada such men were precluded from sitting on the licensing Bench; and surely it was in the interests of the party opposite that they should accept reasonable Amendments. In Australia no justice being an officer or an agent in any society interested in the prevention of the sale of liquor could be appointed on the magistrates Bench. In Canada the same state of things existed, and no person who was known by public statement to be connected with temperance societies whose conduct stamped them as positive opponents of the liquor trade could sit as a justice. He did not know how far his noble friend desired to go, but he did ask the Prime Minister to consider whether it was right to allow those individuals who were saturated with such opinions to adjudicate on on licensing questions. This Bill was likely to create a good deal of feeling in the country, and it was even in the interests of the Party opposite to show that they were willing to accept reasonable Amendments, and thus remove all grounds of suspicion in the administration of the law in regard to licensing.

Mr. ASQUITH: The hon. Gentleman has made a special appeal to me. Let me point out to him that the precedents of Australia and Canada are much more restricted than the proposal before the House. They do not come within the same category as this. The Amendment prohibits the justices from taking any part in the administration of the licensing laws, but would only disqualify them from discharging that function which most nearly approached a purely ministerial function. It would still be open to them to sit on the licensing Bench for judicial duties such as the granting or refusal of new licences. That would be anomalous and ridiculous. I am not talking about drunkenness, but about those who subscribe to licensed victuallers' protection leagues and societies of that kind. We have in this country recognised in the discharge of a purely judicial function no disqualification unless it rests on a pecuniary basis. A Judge, sitting on the Bench and exercising the most solemn and sacred duties, cannot be impeached unless he has a pecuniary interest in the matter, directly or indirectly. The proposal before the Committee, if adopted, would establish a new precedent, and a precedent of a most detrimental kind, and on that ground alone I ask the House to reject it.

Sir E. CARSON: The Prime Minister regards the question as most important. We have to consider decency in the administration of justice, and it is often as important as absolute impartiality. The right hon. Gentleman says the remedy is only a partial remedy. Even a partial remedy is something, and when we get an opportunity we ought to do something to remove the grievance which undoubtedly exists.

Mr. ASQUITH was understood to say that the Party opposite did not challenge the position formerly.

Sir E. CARSON: It is quite sufficient that we have the opportunity now. If a grievance exists and we can only have a partial remedy, let us have a partial remedy. But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that it would be anomalous that those justices should be allowed to adjudicate in certain cases and not in others. After the last Amendment I do not think it comes well from the Prime Minister to talk of anomalies. Why, in cases under this clause, are there to be no appeals? In all other cases there are to be appeals. What about anomalies? Is that any answer? No. If there is an anomaly, it is the anomaly we created by the division on the last Amendment, and I think the fact that this is to be the only and ultimate tribunal raises a strong reason why that tribunal should be above all suspicion. If ever there was a case in which a partial remedy ought to be given, it is a case in which for the first time by the action of this House we take away the right of appeal in relation to the property of a particular trade. Just let us see what the question really is that comes before us on this Amendment. The First Lord of the Admiralty asked—What is the use of this test? We have tests already. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to forget that if you have even the most remote share in a hotel which happens to be licensed, you are not allowed to adjudicate in these cases. But if you are an active exponent of the principle of prohibition, and of the putting down of the liquor traffic altogether, or even if you are a paid advocate of prohibition, you are allowed to adjudicate. What about anomalies again? Is it no anomaly that a man who, in all respects would be an upright magistrate in the adjudication of cases, because he happens to have a share in a hotel in some other place—[MINISTERIAL cries of "No."]—Certainly, in some other place—in an adjoining district. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Hon. Gentlemen need not say "No." If a man happens to have a share in that hotel, he is not allowed to adjudicate, however high his character may be; but if he happens to be a paid lecturer of one of those prohibition societies, which have such large funds at their disposal and which can distribute large quantities of literature throughout the country, he can adjudicate. Does anybody suppose for a moment that persons who have to go before that tribunal, and whose property is going to be taken away from them, will imagine that they are going to get justice from such a tribunal as that when you have taken away the only safeguard they had, namely, the right of appeal to Quarter Sessions? I venture to say that anything more ridiculous it is impossible to conceive. The First Lord of the Admiralty asks—What is the use of this test? He says that a man may have very strong opinions even though he may not have expressed them. That is perfectly true, but I think the right hon. Gentleman would prefer to go before a Bench of magistrates if their opinions had not been expressed, rather than before a Bench who shortly before he had made his application had strongly expressed their opinions in regard to the matter in which he was applying. The whole thing comes back to doing our best to take care that the tribunal set up is an impartial tribunal, as far as we can make it so, and that it will have the confidence of the litigants who go before it. I cannot see how one-sided proposals can ever lead to any litigant—at all events litigants whose property is going to be confiscated—being satisfied with the tribunal which is to be set up. The Prime Minister said that Judges were never excluded except for pecuniary reasons. The magistrates are a very peculiar kind of judicial tribunal. The Judges of the High Court are excluded from taking part in these public matters, in political matters, and in matters of this kind. They are purposely prevented from coming into this House and from taking any active part whatsoever in politics, when they are put on the judicial Bench, so that there may not be the appearance of any bias towards one person or another.

AN HON. MEMBER: Grantham.

SIR E. CARSON: I would rather that the hon. Gentleman did not make an insulting remark about a Judge who is not here to defend himself.

EARL WINTERTON asked whether it was in order, by way of an interruption, to make an insulting insinuation against one of His Majesty's Judges?

*THE CHAIRMAN: Of course it is not in order to make an insulting insinuation against one of His Majesty's Judges The only way of dealing with a Judge in this House is to bring forward a substantive Motion after notice. I did not see who made the interjection. I do not think the hon. Member ought to interject the name of a Judge. [Cries of "Withdraw."]

SIR E. CARSON: I do not think I need take any more notice of what is the very lowest form of cowardice—to attack a man who is not here to defend himself. I appeal to the Government, as they are now setting up the local justices as the sole tribunal in this particular matter—a matter involving so much to the parties who come before them—to make some effort to remedy the grievance under which those parties undoubtedly suffer.

*MR. LEIF JONES thought the right hon. Gentleman opposite had treated the noble Lord's little joke with somewhat ponderous gravity. The whole essence of a good joke was to deliver it with a grave face and in a serious spirit. The Amendment was ridiculous, and he would prove it. The test it proposed to apply was not to be applied to the justices as such but to certain justices acting under this clause. It proposed to exclude from licensing matters magistrates who had expressed opinions of the kind referred to in the Amendment. He took it that under the Amendment practically all members of temperance societies would be excluded from acting on the Bench in those cases. It was not at all the case, as had been said by some hon. Members, that the Amendment was narrowly confined to members of prohibition societies who were interested in the reduction of licences. It would exclude all who had publicly stated their desire that the liquor trade should not exist. [Cries of "No."] He admitted that a lawyer might argue against that, but there would be substantial ground for excluding from the Bench any man who might be called an aggressive teetotaller. Did the noble Lord not desire to exclude such persons?

LORD R. CECIL said he desired to discuss this on the question of principle, and if the Prime Minister was prepared to bring in a general disqualification for those extreme temperance advocates he would be willing to withdraw his Amendment.

MR. ASQUITH: I would like to quote the words of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken, and which express my own views admirably. He said he strongly deprecated the practice of magistrates who have expressed strong temperance views acting on such cases. There was no other course, but to leave it to the good feeling and sense of justice of those magistrates. That is the language of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just addressed the House.

SIR E. CARSON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, was there an appeal at that time?

*MR. LEIF JONES said the noble Lord had declined to define exactly what he did mean, and, therefore, he was left to interpret his Amendment as best he could. Under the Amendment he thought that a person who was an agressive teetotaller would be excluded from the bench in certain licensing cases. How was the noble Lord going to find out who were to act? Were those who drank to be allowed to adjudicate, while those who refused to drink should not be allowed to adjudicate. He seemed to think that those who did not drink were biassed against public-houses, while men who did drink were not biassed in favour of them. There was as much bias in one direction as in the other, and he could only interpret the Amendment as meaning that the noble Lord would exclude those who did not partake of alcohol. He ventured to say that teetotallers had a cooler judgment than those who drank. [OPPOSITION laughter and cries of "No."] He was willing to submit the question to any scientific man in this country. The verdict of the medical profession would be for the teetotaller rather than for those who consumed alcohol; because alcohol was a brain poison which affected the judgment. He said that without any feeling against hon. Gentlemen opposite. The results of recent five bye-elections had rejoiced the breasts of hon. Members opposite. He was told that the victors in these five by-elections were all more aggressive teetotallers than he was; that the hon. Member for Hastings had publically declared his adhesion to teetotalism; that the hon. Member for Peckham was a well-known temperance advocate; and that the hon. Member for Manchester had long associated himself with the Church of England Temperance Society. These were men of clear and unbiassed judgment; as hon. Members opposite would admit. Of course, he could not vouch for these gentlemen. It was hard to know who were teetotallers and who were not. The noble Lord might exclude by his Amendment a man giving vent to the fiercest sentiments against drink, and in secret visiting the public-house of his village by night. But to comfort the noble Lord he would remind him that the function to be discharged under the clause was not to decide whether or not there should be opportunities for drinking. What they had to determine was whether, it having been settled by the House of Commons that a certain number of houses were to be closed in their licensing districts, the people who were abstainers were less fit judges of whch houses ought to be closed, than those who took drink. He could not suppose the noble Lord thought they were less fit on that account, unless he maintained that when a man judged on a particular house he ought to go to that house and taste the quality of the liquor sold there. He did not believe that the noble Lord suggested that, but only that in the discharge of his functions a magistrate should have a clear and unbiassed judgment. A teetotaller could be quite as unprejudiced as any drinker in arriving at a decision on the matter committed to the justices by this clause.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said he thought the Opposition ought to be very glad that the Amendment had called forth answers which served as a sort of mask or screen on the real defence of the Government proposals. It had been said the Amendment was ridiculous. That was what men said when they had nothing else to say. Then they had the dilatory plea that the Amendment did not cover the whole field. If the Amendment was accepted, he assured hon. Members it would not be long before the whole field was covered. In all their speeches hon. Members opposite had failed, as of course they must fail. But they had a man of penetrating instinct in that House, and that was the Prime Minister. The real defence was that there was no precedent for this Amendment, because, forsooth, this Parliament had never forced on any judicial authority any such disqualification as a pecuniary disqualification. He believed that to be historically true, but to be historically unsound. The Prime Minister asked them to remain hide-bound by a tradition which did not exist. He invited the right hon. Gentleman to let the Committee know exactly what kind of motive it was on which the disqualification from sitting in the High Court of Justice rested. The Amendment could not be defeated by laughing at it, or by advancing dilatory pleas, but only by trying to ignore the deep resentment which existed among Unionists when the 1904 Act went through the House, and which they knew to exist among large classes among His Majesty's subjects.

*SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER said that the real point of the disqualification at present was one of direct personal, financial interest. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had indicated that brewers, publicans, and shareholders in liquor trading concerns were as such debarred from sitting on the Bench. That was not correct. They were only debarred if they went to sit on a Bench in the immediate locality in which their interest prevailed. But the largest Burton brewer, if he lived in London, and was a magistrate, could sit on the London Bench. That was a very different law from the law indicated by the Opposition. Under the Act of 1828 every brewer and publican in the country was debarred, but that disqualification was removed. If they were going to carry the Amendment they would have to go a little further. Every man who sat on the Bench had an opinion, and if they debarred because of opinion they would have to debar all. But, further, it had to be remembered that men with something like an interest in trade did sit on the Bench. There were solicitors to brewers advising the brewers and then sitting on the Bench. When the Royal Commission sat they had a solicitor to five breweries who sat on the Bench and adjudicated on their licences when they came before the Bench. Then they had cases of persons interested in what were called the allied trades who sat on the Bench. Were they not more likely to be biassed than temperance men? It was a very big step if they introduced opinion as a test, apart from direct, local, and financial interest. They had justices who were in favour of free trade in licences, and that no licence should be taken away except for misconduct. An Amendment similar to this was moved when the Act of 1904 was under discussion, and the Leader of the Opposition refused to accept it on the ground which he thought the Committee would do well to refuse this Amendment.

*MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) said he agreed that this Amendment was not free from difficulty, inasmuch as it did not cover the point; but it did not follow that some effort should not be made to deal with cases which had caused a positive scandal. Sir Henry Poland, in his examination before the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws, said—

> "If a man has proclaimed to the world that he intends to vote against every licence, whatever its merits may be, he cannot be qualified to sit as a judge exercising the powers given to him by the Act of Parliament. It is like a man proclaiming that he meant to vote for every

> licence in spite of whatever may be said against it. He is bound to come into the Court with an impartial mind, and to exercise his judgment on the facts of the particular case."

Hon. Members who were in the last Parliament would remember the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who was generally admired, and almost beloved, for the courage and consistency of his opinions, and who went out of his way to say that he had never pretended to go on a Bench for licensing purposes in anything like a judicial frame of mind. In the *Alliance News* for 8th June, 1894, Sir Wilfrid said—

> "I object to anybody selling drink, whether he be a fool or a philosopher, a saint or a sinner, a blackguard or a bishop. They are all one to me . . . . Anybody who sells drink is doing an evil to the public, and let us tar them all with the same stick; and make up our minds that we will sweep away the whole boiling as soon as we can."

A particular instance where bias was shown by a justice on a licensing Bench was brought before the Court in the case Regina *v.* Fraser, the Report of which stated —

> "A justice was a member of a voluntary association, one of whose objects was to oppose all licences. He was present at a meeting of the association (though he left before the Resolution was carried) at which it was resolved to instruct a solicitor to oppose a certain application for the transfer of a licence. The solicitor was instructed by the association, and appeared at Special Sessions and opposed the transfer of the licence. The justice in question was present at the Special Sessions, and sat on the bench and adjudicated on the application, which was refused. It was held that the justice was disqualified by bias (as being identified with the opposition to the transfer) and the proceedings were quashed."

What was held there in the case of an individual licence, the Amendment of his noble friend wished to extend to those who had opinions about the transfer or the granting of all licences. He thought it was hardly right for hon. Gentlemen opposite to taunt the Opposition with want of logic in seeking to remedy what they held should be cured. As a matter of fact they thought it could not be done by this clause, but that it could only be carried out by a new clause. However, under the guillotine Motion there would not be time to consider new clauses. As to the Amendment, he denied there were considerable difficulties, and he suggested that a declaratory test should be substituted for the words of the Amendment. He could give two examples of a declaratory test. Hon. Members who served on Private Bills Committees had to make a declaratory test. They said: "I have no personal interest in this Bill." And then they went on to say: "My constituency has no interest in this Bill." That was really a test of opinion. What was meant by that was that those who sat on private Bills were exercising judicial functions and that they must submit to a test. It meant that hon. Members had a natural bias to do something to please their constituents. The same thing applied to licensing justices. Another precedent was that we imposed a test of opinion on the Sovereign when he came to the Throne. He had put down a schedule containing a declaratory test, and if they got to it he would be able to defend his words. In the meantime, as this was the only opportunity of asserting the principle, let them carry the Amendment before them. He would make one more quotation from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who sent the following metrical epistle to Mr. Hall, one of the Derby Justices of the Peace, and a prominent member of the temperance party in that town—

> "Dear Mr. Hall,—I'm delighted to see
> That they've had the good sense to make you a J.P.
> Long, long, may you live to do justice and right,
> The poor to protect, and the publicans fight.
> Temper justice with mercy wherever you go,
> And that's the advice from me and from Roe.
>
> "*P.S.*—If e'er on the Bench for a licence you vote,
> T'will be a sad witness that Hall's changed his coat:
> But no, I am sure that you never will do;
> And whatever betide, you will give Bung his due."

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln) said that if the hon. Gentleman, who had evidently referred to him and said he was poisoned with venom, whilst another hon. Member had stated that the temperance party were saturated with injustice, had known his licensing work they would not have made those charges. There was, he thought, still considerable misconception in the Committee as to what the law was on this point. A man could still be on a licensing Bench if he was pecuniarily interested in the liquor trade, but he was disqualified from acting so far as the district was concerned in which the brewery or distillery in which he was interested was situated and also in the adjoining district. But he could act in any other district on a licensing authority, and a brewer or distiller could act in any district providing his brewery or distillery had no houses in the district which he administered. A licence holder could act on the licensing body in respect to all the houses in the district except the one in which he was interested, and he could act judicially in spite of the disqualification. Therefore the pecuniary disqualification was extremely partial. He congratulated the noble Lord in having gone in this Amendment even further than the brewers before the Licensing Commission, as would be seen from both the majority and minority Reports.

EARL WINTERTON said he desired to put a Question to one of the hon. Members for Norfolk, who had made the only attempt to reply to the Amendment, but first of all he would like to call attention to a remark made by another hon. Member, who said that in his opinion one of the great difficulties in applying the Amendment would be to discover what was the meaning of bias. That really was a most extraordinary admission. Did he mean to contend that those who attended the lobby bar had a bias in favour of it?

*MR. LEIF JONES: I only mean that a man who goes into a public-house to drink has a bias in favour of finding drink there.

EARL WINTERTON said that that was a very different thing from what the hon. Member said originally. He said that a man who visited a public-house was necessarily biassed in favour of a public-house, and not that he was biassed in favour of finding intoxicants there. That was evident on the face of it. The main point in connection with this Amendment was not so much the difficulties which might arise in carrying it out; those difficulties could be got over by subsequent amendment. The point was whether hon. Gentlemen opposite accepted the principle of the Amendment, and he would like to ask the hon. Member for Norfolk whether he believed, as they believed, that this tribunal should be absolutely unbiassed and altogether above the suspicion of bias. Did he think we had freedom from bias now? If they could get answers to those two points, it was within the bounds of possibility that an arrangement might be come to, and they might be able to arrive at an Amendment which would prevent those on either side of the House saying there was any bias in the matter. He certainly did not think we had freedom from bias now. He had in his hand a remark made by Sir Wilfrid Lawson which showed that at any rate he had no delusions as to the opportunities which being upon this tribunal gave. He said in a letter to the Carlisle *Journal*—

> "I consider licences for the sale of drink are not required for the public convenience; on the contrary, I hold they cause very great public inconvenience, and shall act on my conviction until the publican can succeed in getting my name struck off the roll of magistrates."

There was an absolute instance of a sincere advocate of temperance who was actually in favour of his views controlling his action on the licensing Bench. The point of the Amendment had never really been met. Would hon. Gentlemen opposite accept the principle they put forward that these tribunals should be above all breath of suspicion? It would be an absolute farce if the hon. Member for Appleby was on a licensing Bench. They might as well make a member of the Little Navy Party the First Lord of the Admiralty. They appealed to hon. Gentlemen opposite to accept the principle of this Amendment, and attempt to make these tribunals as far as possible free from bias.

MR. ASHLEY thought that before the division was taken the Committee ought to be perfectly clear as to what it was upon which they were going to vote. It seemed to him that hon. Members thought if the Amendment were carried that what the hon. Member for Appleby called the earnest temperance reformers would be excluded from the licensing Benches, but if they read the Amendment they would see that that was not the case. If it was he could not support the Amendment for a moment. The question on which the vote would shortly be taken was whether a man who supported the total prohibition of the sale of liquor in this country should be allowed to sit on any of these licensing Benches. That was a clear issue and was not at all mixed up with earnest temperance reform views or anything of that sort. He was surprised to hear the Prime Minister earlier in the discussion say that the discretion given to the licensing magistrates was very narrow. On the contrary, in some cases, it seemed to him of the widest possible character. If hon. Members referred to Clause 3 of the Schedule they would see that discretion was given to them to increase the number of licensed houses where large numbers of people resorted to a district at certain seasons of the year or at particular times of the day. Did anybody suppose that, at any of the great seaside towns, with the number of people who went there, the discretion of the licensing magistrates was narrow under the Bill? Were they to keep the licences down to what they should be for the normal population of the town and take no notice of the thousands who came in during the summer months? At Blackpool, 150,000 people sometimes came in in one day, and he suggested that to say the licensing body should have regard to the normal needs of the 50,000 inhabitants and not provide for the 150,000 or 200,000 visitors who came there in a day was treating this Amendment with scant courtesy. Let them take again a country town where the licensed houses were far more than was sufficient to meet the needs of the town on the ordinary days, when the market day came and farmers and others came in from all parts it was a very different matter. The Committee must remember that in voting for this Amendment it only aimed at keeping from the licensing bench those who believed in total prohibition.

*MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing) said he only desired to intervene in the debate for the purpose of giving to the Committee two instances from his personal experience which bore on this question. The first was that of a gentleman connected with a brewery who had taken part, whether inadvertently or not he could not say, but he thought so—not in determining whether a licence should be granted, but in the selection of the borough licensing committee, he being a magistrate for the borough in question. For that error, he was brought up to the King's Bench Division and fined £500. In the second instance, he himself was a member of the Middlesex Bench, and a reverend gentleman, who was also a member of the Bench, and whose interest in the work of the Bench always showed increased activity, and a marked one on the days set apart for licensing, before ever the Court was opened, and before ever a scintilla of evidence was given, went through every one of the applications and indicated his intention of refusing them all, and at the same time canvassing his colleagues, including the speaker, to support him, and for their concurrence in that view. There were two illustrations. In the one the justice who had an interest in a brewery was fined for more or less inadvertently taking part in the selection of the licensing committee, while in the other the justice was able to indicate his intention of refusing all applications because he had a bias in that direction. The latter was a very strong argument in favour of the Amendment, which was directed to render Benches really impartial and free from prejudice either way, so that the discretion which the House of Lords had held existed might be exercised in a judicial spirit after hearing evidence, as they the highest tribunal had directed they should do.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) was understood to say that the hon. Member who had just spoken had referred to the jurisdiction to refuse applications. [Cries of "Speak up."] He ventured to say that there was no judicial refusal at all by the Bench, as was shown in the case before the House of Lords in which the Kent parties were concerned. He was an advocate of temperance, and he thought that all in that House were advocates of temperance, and desired to put down drunkenness. He lived in a place near his constituency where there was perhaps more drunkenness than in any part of the United Kingdom, and he contended that, as regarded such a place, acting on this decision of the House of Lords, a justice could always refuse applications for licences. If the Amendment of the noble Lord were carried, he would still be entitled to refuse an application.

LORD R. CECIL: Not now.

MR. MARKHAM: Not now, perhaps, after what he had said in the debate. But in the present state of the law, the justice did not act judicially, and he could vote against the granting of licences if, in his knowledge and belief, the district had an undue number of them. It was a waste of time to go on discussing these points for now nearly three hours, when after all the law was clear. He hoped the Committee would come to a decision, in order that they might be enabled to reach more important questions.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover) said he wanted to defend Members of the front bench opposite from the imputation of the hon. Member for Appleby that he had a clearer judgment on these matters than they possessed. He was quite sure that he could defend his own front bench. He felt sorry for hon. Gentlemen opposite that they had not been able to get up and defend their front bench from the imputation made by the hon. Member for Appleby.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 122; Noes, 315. (Division List No. 203.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
McIver, Sir Lewis
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington)
Percy, Earl
Ratcliffe, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Henry Gooch.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. Herbert Jn.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazelton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster)
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Kelley, Conor (Mayo, N.)

Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M.(Suffolk,Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H.(Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt.Hon. T.(Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs. N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampt'n
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker,H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W.Dudley(Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Wason,Rt.Hn. E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J.(York,W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H.(Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W.(St.Pancras,S.)
Wilson, W. T.(Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The next Amendment in the name of the noble Lord is not in the right place.

EARL WINTERTON said the Amendment proposed to do something different from the one already disposed of.

*THE CHAIRMAN: It would not come here. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Kingston is already disposed of.

MR. YOUNGER asked if that was so. It proposed to substitute quarter sessions for the licensing justices. In the other case the quarter sessions were only introduced as an appellate Court.

*THE CHAIRMAN said the subject of the debate was not only as to an Appeal Court, but also as to which was the better tribunal.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I respectfully ask whether any speaker in favour of the first Amendment suggested that Quarter Sessions was a better Court of first instance?

*THE CHAIRMAN said the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford University certainly advocated it, and other Members also. He had taken particular notice of the debate. The next Amendment in order was that of the hon. Member for Edgbaston.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE moved to insert after licensing justices the words "if it be shown to their satisfaction that the number of on-licenses in any district is excessive, having regard to the needs of the population." He said the object of his Amendment was not in any way to interfere with the number of existing licences being reduced to any extent which, after due inquiry, might be found to be necessary in the interests of true temperance reform. The object he wished to achieve was to ensure that these reductions, whenever and wherever they might be found to be necessary, should be carried out by some competent and proper tribunal in something like a fair and equitable manner, and on something like a rational and intelligible basis. Under the clause as it stood it would appear that the Government had constituted themselves the sole authority for deciding what licences were required, how many of them should be done away with, and how many of them should be allowed to continue in every urban and rural district, and they had practically left to the local licensing justices no discretion in the matter. They had transformed them into a sort of automatic penny in the slot machine, to register the decrees which the Government sought to impose upon them. They were allowed to make certain modifications in some cases, but it was not at all obligatory upon them to do so, and they need not allow themselves to be guided by any local considerations, nor take into account in any way the wishes of the locality or the needs of the district. But they must, whether they liked it or not, proceed to make reductions blindfold in accordance with the arbitrary standard of population laid down in the schedule. How and by whom that cast-iron schedule of reductions was arrived at goodness only knew. He would not be at all surprised, when its secret history came to be known, if its authorship were traced to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley, so that after all it was probably he who would be the sole arbiter and the final Court of Appeal to decide how many licences were to be allowed to continue, not only in Yorkshire, with which he was acquainted, but in every other part of the country. They all had the greatest respect for the character and ability of the right hon. Gentleman, but he would hardly regard himself as altogether an unprejudiced and unbiassed judge on a question of this kind. However, the Government had adopted the scheme and were responsible for it, and he would be very curious indeed to hear how they proposed to explain or to justify it on any ground of reason, justice, or common sense. There was no doubt that the number and density of the population in any given locality were quite important factors in deciding the number of licences required to supply the needs of the district, but there were many other considerations which ought to be borne in mind as well. For instance, there were the questions of the nature and habits of the population. There was the question of the fixed and permanent or the moveable and fluctuating nature of the population. Then, there was the question as to whether people were likely to go out of the district or come into it at certain periods of the day or seasons of the year. There was the question whether more houses were likely to be built or not, and whether the population was likely to increase or decrease; there was also the question of the existence or non-existence of clubs and places other than licensed houses where drink might be obtained. There were also a large number of other considerations which could only properly be inquired into and adjudicated upon by those who were acquainted with the locality and its probable needs and requirements. He would like to ask any sensible person in the world to say whether all these questions could be best decided by the Government, sitting in a room in London, with ordnance maps and census returns before them, or whether they could not be much better decided by the local licensing justices, who knew well the district that they had to deal with and had all the facts and figures at their fingers' ends. He would have thought himself that the Act of 1904 was working uncommonly well, and that everything which the Government were seeking to accomplish under the Bill could be accomplished quite as effectually and in a more equitable manner under that Act if they would only give it a further trial. During the three and a half years it had been in operation the average yearly reduction of licences had been about 1,500. If that process were allowed to go on something like 23,000 or 24,000 licences would be extinguished under the present law at the expiration of the fourteen years which had been fixed. That came to very nearly the estimate which the Government made of the number of licences they wanted to extinguish during that period, that number being 30,000. If they would only leave the present law alone very nearly the number they estimated under this Bill would be extinguished under the existing law. If, as the Prime Minister said in introducing this Bill, the reduction was not going on fast enough and it was necessary that its operation should be accelerated, he respectfully submitted that that could be done under this Amendment and a consequential Amendment standing in his name. If this method was adopted by the Government the machinery which already existed for making these reductions would not in any way be interfered with, for if it was shown to the satisfaction of the licensing justices that further reductions on any large scale were needed in any district, all they would have to do would be to submit a scheme to Quarter Sessions who would be able to make the necessary reductions to carry out the scheme at once, under the powers they already possessed under the Act of 1904, and there would be this manifest and overwhelming advantage over the method which the Government proposed? The licensing justices and the Court of Quarter Sessions would be well acquainted with, and they would be obliged to take into their consideration, all the local circumstances of the case and the needs and requirements of the district, before they adopted or put any scheme into operation. They would also be obliged to pay to those licence holders who would be deprived of their licences in order that this scheme of reduction might be carried out, the fair, equitable, and adequate amount of compensation which they were now entitled to receive under the present law, instead of the miserable pittance allowed to them under this Bill. In conclusion, he would very much like to know whether the main and primary object of the Government in bringing forward this Bill was to promote the cause of temperance? If that was their object then he, said without fear of contradiction that it could be accomplished under the Amendment which he proposed just as well as under the clause as it stood. But there was this difference between the two. Under the clause of the Government they were bound to inflict a serious wrong and injustice on a very large number of unoffending people, whereas, under his Amendment, no injustice or wrong could possibly be inflicted upon any single individual. If, on the other hand, their object was not to promote temperance but to obtain a financial advantage to the State by dishonest means, if in point of fact, they had found another hen roost which they meant to rob and plunder, by all means let them frankly admit it, let them adhere rigidly to their clause, and then this veil of hypocrisy would be stripped from their faces and they would all know, and the country would know, what their real motive was in bringing forward a confiscatory measure of this character. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 8, line 8, after the words 'Licensing Justices,' to insert the words 'If it be shown to their satisfaction that the number of on-licences in any district is excessive, having regard to the needs of the population."—(*Sir Francis Lowe.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. L. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): I do not complain of the hon. Gentleman in regard to his later observations or in reference to the Amendment which he has moved, because we realise fully that he is an opponent of the Bill. He will not expect that the Government will show any sympathy or give any quarter to the Amendment which he has just moved. His Amendment, in fact, would defeat the whole object of this clause and consequently would defeat the whole object of the Bill. To state our object quite frankly, what we wish to do is to compel backward justices all over the country to bring the licences down to a certain proportion of the population which in our opinion is just and sufficient. The hon. Member by this Amendment would leave a complete option to the licensing justices to reduce or not to reduce at their own sweet will. I am a little surprised that he should be prepared to leave so large a discretion to the justices whose qualifications we have heard described with such frankness to-day, and who were accused by one of the hon. Members for Liverpool of being "poisoned with venom." If that be so, the less discretion you leave to these gentlemen the better. The Government are not leaving them a large discretion. In fact we are leaving them none as to the statutory number to which licences are to be reduced, although we give them a power of modification under Schedule I to make many of the arrangements which the hon. Member thinks are not included in the Bill. We will justify the proportion of population to licences in its proper place when we come to it, which will be later in the year. The justices have power with certain modification to provide for the different needs of different populations and to deal especially with areas containing larger day than night populations. As the hon. Member will see in Clause 6, Section 3, they have power at any time to revise their scheme according to the alteration which may occur in the habits of the people and the distribution of the population in their area. It is unnecessary for me to explain further why the Government cannot possibly accept an Amendment which strikes at the whole root of this Bill.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he was sorry that the Government could not accept this Amendment, because he thought it was a very needful one. At the present time the discretion of the magistrates was a very valuable asset in deciding these questions. An Amendment of this kind would be more likely to produce temperance in the way of the reduction of licences than the cast-iron reduction provided for in the schedule. The hon. Member for Mansfield said he always voted against the granting of new licences, but this schedule would not affect the number of licences in the district which he referred to, was one of the most drunken districts in England. He knew another district where this schedule would not reduce a single licence. It was a pity that the licensing justices should be compelled to apply this provision in districts where there was hardly any drunkenness and thus prejudice the action of the Bill. This would happen in districts where hardly such a thing as a drunken man was seen from year's end to year's end. He thought the Amendment would make the acceptance of the schedule optional, and in that way it would operate in the right direction. The Amendment would not interfere in any way with the vital part of the Bill, or with the time-limit, which would come into operation where the magistrates adopted the schedule. Therefore, he thought the Amendment was a good thing, because it made the first clause of the Bill more consistent with the second clause than it was at the present time. The second clause gave a certain amount of local option, and the Amendment gave a certain amount of option to the magistrates in regard to the reduction of licences. He did not think the schedule would affect the reduction intended, and it would be a great disappointment and cause dissatisfaction in the country where there was really very little need for any action of the kind proposed in the Bill. From entirely different motives from those which had prompted the hon. Member to move the Amendment, because he was thinking more of the protection of certain financial interests, which although he respected them he did not care twopence halfpenny about, while he wanted to promote temperance, he would be very glad if the Government could see their way, if not to adopt this Amendment, at least to indicate that they proposed to adopt some Amendment in the direction of giving the justices some discretion.

MR. F. E. SMITH said the Amendment moved by his hon. friend opened really a very wide question of principle as between those in favour of the present licensing proposals and those who were not. The Amendment proposed that if it were shown to the satisfaction of the licensing justices that the number of on-licences was not excessive having regard to the needs of the population, the obligation upon the justices should up to that extent be qualified. The Government thought that whatever view the licensing justices might hold as to the desirability in their own areas of dealing with the licensing problem and the reduction of licences, a cast-iron automatic scheme should be imposed upon them. He was not so sure that the case attempted to be made by the First Commissioner of Works was an extremely happy one having regard to the antecedents of the

Government on the licensing question. The right hon. Gentleman said that the justices would have the power of destroying the whole object of the Bill, and he claimed that the Amendment of his hon. friend would leave an unduly large discretion in the hands of the local justices. He was not in the House some years ago when the discussions took place on the Licensing Bill of his right hon. friend, but he had read the debates and nothing was more striking than the insistence with which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite claimed that inadequate discretion was left to the licensing justices or the emphasis with which they laid stress on the competence of the licensing justices to perform any functions put upon them. They argued that it would be a misfortune to the whole licensing administration if their discretion was in any way restricted. In the present proposals, the Government were cutting themselves adrift from all that local knowledge on the part of the magistrates, which one would have supposed, a few years ago, to be the whole of their reforming stock-in-trade, and they preferred the alternative course of imposing upon the justices an alternative scheme prepared by themselves. One would have imagined that in taking that course, they would at least have obtained some actuarial calculations in order to commend their scheme to the House. But in the answer of the Prime Minister to his hon. friend, the scheme of the Government was shown not to depend upon a scientific or actuarial calculation, but represented the idea of somebody undisclosed as to what would be a convenient scale and rate of reduction. The Committee were not privileged to be informed of the stages of reasoning by which the Government arrived at the conclusion or of the information that was before them or of the pressure exercised upon them before proposing it. What did the scheme of the Government depend upon? It depended, of course, upon the view that if the local justices were compelled to reduce the number of licences in the area under their jurisdiction on the scale which was provided in the schedule, drunkenness would be diminished in that area; but the Government refused to the justices themselves the right of saying whether in their particular areas, having regard to the circumstances, they believed that result would be obtained. The scheme of the Government depended upon the assumption which had no warrant whatever in any figures ever produced as to the extent of the growth of drunkenness in this country. If the schedule of the Government could not be defended on the ground that the scale imposed on the justices—whether they desired it or not, was one which would have the effect of reducing intemperance, it was quite obvious it could not be defended upon any ground at all. How far did recent statistics published by a Government Department lend countenance to the view that under this scheme intemperance would be reduced. One thing which the licensing statistics of the present year conclusively established was that the number of licensed premises in a particular area bore no relation whatever to the extent of drunkenness in that area.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the Government scheme on this Amendment.

MR. F. E. SMITH said that his hon. friend had moved an Amendment which would have the effect of leaving justices a discretion as to whether or not the Government scale should be applied. The alternative proposal was the proposal of the Government that a hard and fast scale of reduction should be applied. His argument was founded upon the fact that recent licensing statistics showed that there was no such relation between the reduction proposed by the Government and the amount of intemperance.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: The hon. and learned Member must not go into the merits of the Government scheme. He cannot go into a detailed examination of that scheme on this Amendment.

MR. F. E. SMITH said he did not wish to pursue the point if he was not in order. He was not going into the details of the Government scheme, but what he was proposing to do if he was in order was to show that the Government scheme was inferior to the proposal of his hon. friend for this reason, that judging by experience such reductions had not been found to produce an effect upon intemperance in given areas. Taking it in the most general way possible it would be found on an examination of the latest licensing statistics that if they took four counties in England in which the convictions for drunkenness——

*The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: That is going outside of the Amendment and into details of the Government scheme, the discussion of which would come later.

Mr. F. E. SMITH said that what he had said was not in order and he was not to be permitted to enter into the subject of the needs of the population by showing what the official Statistics had shown to be the need, he would venture to say that no calculation had ever been adduced by any of the hon. Members opposite who were familiar with the statistics on this subject, which had ever shown or tended to show that the reduction of the number of licences had any connection at all with the state of intemperance in the areas in which those licences were reduced. He reminded the Committee that Mr. Gladstone's attention was directed to a proposal very closely resembling that of the Government and he said that if a reduction in the number of public-houses pretended to the dignity of a remedy it was nothing more than a sham. Under those circumstances he would prefer that the justices in each district should be able to deal with the problems which presented themselves for treatment in their particular areas. He would illustrate this by a case which had come under his own notice. It was a county borough, where, in point of fact, cases of drunkenness were far fewer than almost any other county borough in England. There were very few at any rate which could show better results. He did not pretend to explain it sociologically, but in that borough the number of convictions for drunkenness was extraordinarily small, while at the same time the number of licences per 10,000 of the population was extraordinarily large. In such a case was it to be suggested that the local justices, finding themselves in the position of exercising jurisdiction in a borough of almost unexampled sobriety, so far as the population were concerned, were to be compelled to bring about the very great pecuniary hardship which by universal admission would be occasioned by this Bill, not only without the certainty of effecting any moral reform, but with the certainty that no moral reform would be brought about, because the statistics of sobriety stood higher there at present than in any other town in the kingdom? To lay down that doctrine and to say that the justices would be made merely the automatic mouthpieces of what was suggested by another department in London, and to say that if these gentlemen did not carry out the instructions they received from London, they were then to be subjected to the jurisdiction of a committee of three who were to deal with them for their administrative failure; that might be right or wrong, but it was certainly a very big step from what had been deemed the discretion of the justices.

*Mr. G. D. FABER said he was rather surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman opposite talking about compelling the local justices to move forward. The conclusion they arrived at on the last division was that the local justices were to be trusted and the Quarter Sessions were to be swept away altogether. Now the right hon. Gentleman got up and said that the local justices were so little to be held in confidence that they were to be compelled to take a certain line by a committee of three sitting in London. That was a very extraordinary position for the Government to put themselves in. It contradicted the whole attitude taken up by the supporters of the Government in regard to the licensing justices since 1904. In Parliament and on every platform in the country Radical candidates had said: "Restore the power of the local justices," and on the first opportunity they got of putting that great principle into practice they went away in a contrary direction. The right hon. Gentleman said that they could not trust the local justices; that they must have some power in the background to compel them to move forward. The question raised by this Amendment was a very large one. It was which system was the best of the two. Were they to have hard and fast machinery as laid down by the Government clause, extinguishing, by Act of Parliament a certain number of licences in a certain number of years? He had the high authority of the late Mr. Gladstone for stating that a limitation of the number of licences if intended as a remedy for intemperance was little better than a sham. The right hon. Gentleman disagreed with the prediction of that great man—a man who had studied the temperance question deeply. He was afraid that in these degenerate Radical days the Radical party had travelled a long way, not only from that dictum but many others of Mr. Gladstone's. The Government would no doubt found themselves upon the Minority Report as to fixing licences according to population. They always relied on the Minority Report if and when it happened to suit their views. But the Majority Report, after all, was signed by men of independent minds, and that said that there was no correlation between the number of licensed houses and the amount of drunkenness. Why should the House of Commons found itself on this matter on the Minority Report and not on the Majority Report? This cast-iron system would not work. The Government's proposal had not even the merits of the bed of Procrustes.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Gentleman is getting away from the Amendment.

*MR. G. D. FABER said he was going to show that the Government wished to prevent the local justices from extending the number of licences in an area, when new licences were less than the statutory limit. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Certainly they did; because if the way in which the areas were apportioned was examined it would be found perfectly possible for a whole borough to have less than the number of licences provided under the Bill. Therefore, he said that this clause was not even a Procrustean clause. Procrustes shortened his victim's bodies to suit his bed, but he also extended the length of his victims' bodies if they were too short for the bed, until they were long enough; whereas the Government were giving the power to cut down the redundant licences, but not to extend them where they were insufficient. He wished to point out that their action was contradictory, and that if they did not accept the Amendment they would go back on everything they had said for nearly five years.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Gentleman is going over the same ground again.

*MR. G. D. FABER said that this matter was so important that it could hardly be emphasised too often. Of course, the Government action was contradictory and the Amendment was consonant with all the professions of the Radical Party during the past five years.

*MR. NIELD said he did not think that during the whole time he had been in the House he had ever seen such an illustration of inconsistency as had been given that night. They had reached one of the most important points of the Bill and yet the enthusiasts on the other side who had put pressure on the Government to press forward the Bill were conspicuously absent. The policy of the Government was grossly inconsistent with the utterances of the Radical Party on every platform since 1904. The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works had spoken of the New Commission pressing forward the backward justices to do their duty in extinguishing licences. Such language was in keeping with the talk of the President of the Board of Trade, when the English Land Act was about to be introduced, about "gingering" the county councils to carry out the provisions of that measure whether or no those councils (the most democratic and recently constituted bodies) considered there was a demand for small holdings and allotments in their county. This was what the Radical party called "trusting the people." It was proposed by this Bill to fetter the discretion of the licensing magistrates by a hard and fast rule, which provided that they should take upon themselves the *role* of prophets and determine what in certain places would be the population at a certain period, in order to determine upon a scheme which should at the end of that period leave just so many licensed houses per head of population as was provided for in the schedule. The whole thing was absurd. They all knew that there were districts where in the old days licences were granted freely, and where in the inner Metropolitan area licences were far too thick. But in suburban districts, where licences had been moderately granted having regard to the wants of the neighbourhood at the time, was the growing population not to be taken into account? In districts like the old parish of St. Pancras, the possibilities of building and growth of population had been reached, and the justices could say, having all the facts and figures to go upon, what would be the needs of the population at the end of fourteen years. But they could not do that with other neighbourhoods, where houses would be turned into tenements; and where within fourteen years the whole character of the population might be changed. He maintained that the provision in the Bill was without justification and contrary to the declarations and professions of the Radical Party, and was one of the best illustrations which could be imagined, of the organised hypocrisy which lay behind this measure.

Mr. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.) said that this clause was so unjust and so unfair that he felt it his duty to protest against it. The Government first of all denied the right of appeal to Quarter Sessions on the ground that the licensing justices were quite competent to deal with applications for licences, but they were denied the right or opportunity of forecasting accurately what the population of a district would be in the future, and of saying whether the licences in that district were sufficient. He considered that the proposal of the Government was antagonistic to and subversive of every principle of local government. Upon a subject where there should be some regard for local opinion and local knowledge of facts, the Government were arrogantly setting up an automatic machine under their own control, and, right or wrong, the local justices were required to work this machine for reducing licences. If the object of the Government was to bring the number of licences into conformity with the needs of the people in the locality, they should have some regard to local opinon and pay some attention to the facts of the case. They should not arrogantly override their opinions and say: "Here are a certain number of licences to be reduced, and you must carry out this law whether you think it right or wrong. Local opinion is to have no voice in the matter. It is a cast-iron law, and it is for you to carry it out."

*Mr. L. HARCOURT pointed out that under the first schedule the licensing justices were empowered to vary the application of the Bill according to the special needs of the district. Clause 6, subsection 3, provided that the licensing justices might as occasion required revise their scheme with reference to any alteration in the circumstances of their district. The system of the Bill was not a cast-iron one. A very large discretion in these matters was allowed to the justices. With regard to the Act of 1904, he observed that the magistrates were then being deprived of the discretion they possessed. The Act was a measure to fetter their freedom of action.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY, on a point of order, asked whether, if the right hon. Gentleman discussed the Act of 1904, the Opposition would be allowed to do so.

*The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said that obviously there could be no discussion on the Act of 1904. He understood in this case it was merely being referred to. The reference, however, could not be carried further.

Mr. L. HARCOURT said that he only wished to show that as the Act was an Act to fetter their freedom of action this was a Bill to fetter their freedom of inaction. The fact that in a place there were a number of licences and an absence of convictions for drunkenness was no proof that drunkenness did not exist. Absence of convictions was consistent with a large amount of drunkenness if the police were encouraged to be supine by the Bench.

*Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) thought that everyone would admit that this portion of the Bill was extremely difficult to deal with. He complained that the Government had dumped upon the House a proposal to abolish a number of licensed houses by a certain method without attempting to see how that method would act. In answer to a Question of his on the 9th of March last the Prime Minister admitted that he had had no information from his advisers as to how this method would act in the various rural and urban districts. The right hon. Gentleman dealt with some sample cases, no doubt drawn by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Spen Valley, and not such cases perhaps as he himself would have drawn it he had been asked to perform that operation. The Licensing Commission considered this matter with great care, and came to the conclusion that it was quite impossible to suggest any scheme of this kind which would not operate adversely in some districts. In many towns the licensing justices had confined the licensed houses to certain areas in order to have a more complete police control over them, and had refused to scatter them over the town. And no doubt by that means they had secured better control. One of the difficulties of this case was, for example, that of a town which ought to have 110 or 120 licences according to the scale, but where the existing licences were so distributed that if this scheme were carried out as it stood the town would be left with only fifty licences. That was a thing which nobody could defend. This was a very important Amendment which would, he hoped, receive the careful consideration of hon. Gentlemen opposite and their support in the division lobby. It was certain that this was one of the greatest changes proposed by the Bill, and one that would operate more seriously in reducing licences than hon. Members thought. The number of licences to be reduced in fourteen years would be far greater than the right hon. Gentleman intended if this scheme was allowed to go through. Because, although there was no power under the Bill to increase the number of licences, the obligation to decrease them would be greatly enlarged. It would be an invidious task for licensing justices, because the so-called compensation allowed was not even a proper solatium to the people whose houses were taken away.

*MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn) said the further the debate proceeded the more hon. Gentlemen opposite showed discredit to their common sense and injustice to those with whom they were dealing. No hon. Member opposite, with the exception of the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley, had attempted to answer the points raised by the Amendment. No one had attempted to defend the Government's position. Neither the Home Secretary nor his Under-Secretary had taken part in the discussion of a matter in which of all the Government Departments concerned theirs was the most affected. This Amendment showed the extraordinary attitude of the Government. At one moment they said they trusted implicitly the licensing justices, and at the next they did not trust them at all. The licensing justices were to have nothing to do but administer the Bill according to the Prime Minister, while the First Commissioner said that under subsection 3 of Section 6 they might be called upon, as occasion required, to revise the whole scheme in relation to their district. He did not understand the position taken up by the Government. They all desired to produce a Bill that would work smoothly in practice, but under the guillotine they were to be called upon to pass clauses which could not be carried out in practice or with justice. Whatever happened, everything was going to be worked and ordered by a Commission sitting in London and wholly out of touch with local requirements and perhaps composed of hon. Gentlemen like the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley and the hon. Member for Appleby and the hon. Member for Lincoln. If that was so, he could only inform the right hon. Gentleman that in his opinion and the opinion of the country the whole thing was a farce from beginning to end.

*MR. CLAVELL SALTER (Hants, Basingstoke) thought it was admitted by all those who had fairly considered the Bill that the point which they were now considering was to a great extent a leap in the dark. It was really impossible to say how the reduction would work out in practice either in regard to the country as a whole or in any particular part. That being so, the Amendment was a reasonable attempt to minimise that uncertainty by availing themselves of that which surely was greatly relied upon by Liberals in all other matters, viz., the elasticity and safety which was attained by having recourse to local knowledge on local needs. In answer to that, it was pointed out by the First Commissioner of Works that they must turn to Clause 6. He based his argument upon a power which was given there. Clause 6 was headed "Schemes for Statutory Reduction," and subsection 3 to which the right hon. Gentleman referred related to a power given to licensing justices to revise schemes which they were to prepare. They had to prepare a scheme showing that they would reduce here in this proportion and there in that proportion, this year to this extent and that year to that extent, and they might if they thought fit, and quite rightly, alter these details from time to time. The scheme, however, was after all one to carry out the statutory reduction required by the Act. It was therefore idle of the right hon. Gentleman to refer them to Section 6, subsection 3, as an argument that any sort of discretion was given by the Bill to justices in any way to alter or amend or modify the hard and fast minimum of reduction which the Act forced upon them, whether they desired it or not.

Mr. LANE-FOX said that to his mind one of the great blots on the scheme of the Bill was that it would set up a hard and fast rule and standard as to the number of licences and did not in the least distinguish between varieties in the amount of trade done or the number of people who frequented the house. The local justices would know the needs of the population and the extent to which a house was used; and in that way there would be far better administration under the Amendment than under the Government's scheme. The schedule was particularly hard and fast on this point. It dealt with the number of licences and not at all with the particular class of the house or the quality of the trade done. That was a matter in which local discretion was strictly needed.

Mr. ASHLEY said the First Commissioner of Works, in answer to the mover of the Amendment, made great play with the fact that under the schedule of the Bill discretion was left to the licensing justices to meet the necessities of various places under various circumstances. He would invite the Committee to look at the beginning of the schedule. They would there see that modifications might be made in the strict application of the scale, but it did not seem to meet the case of his constituency, for instance, which had every day of the week a large population coming in quadrupling the normal population of the borough. A modification in the strict application of the scale to the 50,000 inhabitants of Blackpool would not in the least meet the needs of the case, and on that ground alone he strongly supported the Amendment to give the local justices, the people who knew the town and its needs and what was likely to be the needs of its visitors, the power to decide what should be the number of licences to be granted. The Committee of the House of Commons knew no more about the local circumstances of each individual area than it probably knew about astronomy. Surely they would at any rate have the support in this matter of the right hon. Member for Spen Valley. He hoped he would be consistent, and act up to his declarations. A few years ago he said the full discretion of the licensing authority was absolutely necessary to the proper supervision of the liquor trade, and he went on to say that for seventy years the policy of his side of the House had been to give greater power to the local justices. Full discretion was the keynote of their party. Could the right hon. Gentleman, if he voted against this Amendment, get up and say he was carrying out the declarations he made in 1904? Would the Liberal Party as a whole be acting up to their professions of two or three years ago if they voted against the Amendment?

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN called the hon. Member to order, stating that what the Liberal Party did several years ago had nothing to do with the Amendment.

MR. ASHLEY said they would agree that the Liberal Party had broken their pledges upon this matter, and that there was no more to be said about it. He urged the Committee to consider very earnestly whether the Amendment should not be carried. As an illustration of the working of the scheme he took a Bench of licensing justices who had to reduce the number of licences in a small town by three. They went carefully into each case and found that all the licensed holders were well conducted and that all three houses, in their opinion, were necessary for the needs of the town and district. What could they do? They could only take away the three licences according to the scale as laid down in the schedule, although in their opinion it was not necessary and would do harm to the town. Surely, it would be better to leave them full discretion to deal with the matter.

*MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton) said the debate had convinced him of the superlative excellence of the measure and had discovered to him new charms in it. Hon. Members opposite were much exercised as to the consistency of the Government with regard to trusting to the discretion of the justices, but, if it was inconsistent for the Government to prefer the local justices in one case and not in another, it was equally inconsistent of hon. Gentlemen opposite not to prefer them in one case and to prefer them in the other. The hon. Member for Barkston Ash had objected to the clause because it dealt with the number of public-houses and not with their quality; but discretion was left to the justices to prepare a scheme to carry out the statutory reduction and with full local knowledge at their disposal to select those houses most fitted to remain and those which they most desired to see closed. The hon. Member for Blackpool was concerned about the strict application of the schedule to his constituency, but modifications were provided for, and subsection 3 of the schedule was designed precisely to meet cases like the hon. Member's constituency.

MR. ASHLEY: Am I to understand that it will be made clear that this is to be a large exception and not a small exception?

*MR. MONTAGU said that, if the hon. Member had any doubt that Blackpool was satisfactorily included in the provision, when they came to the schedule would be the time to insert Amendments. It seemed to him that hon. Members had again and again misread the Bill. They alleged that it was not competent for justices to grant new licences, but there were many rural districts in England—in Cornwall for example— where there were less public-houses than were provided for under the statutory scale, and justices would have every power to grant new licences, providing they did not grant them to bring the total above the statutory scheme. There was a clause which allowed local option with regard to new licences, and, under Clause 4, subsection 1, there was power given to the justices not to stop at the statutory scale of reduction, but to go beyond it where the people in the district desired it. It seemed to him, therefore, that under the provisions of the Bill the discretion of the justices was so large that it was no wonder the hon. Member for the Ayr Burghs failed to obtain any declaration from the Government as to the exact results of the application of the schedule.

*MR. CAVE asked whether the scale should be compulsory on all benches or whether the benches should not have some discretion in reference to local needs. The first element which the local benches ought to take into account in considering the granting or renewal of a licence was that of population. Under the Bill some regard was paid to population, but not to the population at the time when the applicant went for renewal, but to the population at the date of the last census, which might be five, six or nine years previously, and no regard could be had to growth of population since that date. That did not seem to him common sense. Secondly, they should have regard to change of population—migration from one parish to another which had begun and appeared likely to continue. They should also surely have some regard to the question whether the licensed house served, not only the ward or parish in which it was, but some neighbouring parish or ward. They must have some regard to the boundary question, but under this clause they had no regard to it at all. Unless the Amendment was accepted, magistrates were bound to adhere to the statutory scale, subject to exceptions which might not apply in the cases he had put. Further, different places differed in their habits and in the manner in which they lived, and in their occupations. Some required more houses or houses nearer the actual habitations of the people than other parishes, but under the Bill no kind of regard would be had to these facts. The magistrates must not have regard to local circumstances. They must simply keep their eye on the scale and conform to it whatever the facts might be with which they had to deal. Surely there was something to be said for an Amendment giving some kind of discretion to justices. The charm which the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire saw in the Bill was that the justices had discretion to refuse but no discretion to renew, if by so doing they slightly infringed the scale. If they were going to force benches to refuse licences which they thought to be required, the effect would be to reduce the houses, but not to reduce drunkenness. It would lead to the opening out of new sources of supply not under proper supervision and not so legitimate as those which they were suppressing. Instead of reducing drunkenness they would be increasing it. He felt very strongly that if they wanted to deal with matters in a commonsense way they ought to leave the local benches some greater latitude than that which was given by the fixed statutory scale. He strongly supported the Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Member who had last spoken on the Ministerial side had said Members on his own side and also Members of the Opposition were inconsistent. But it did not improve matters for the pot to call the kettle black. Two wrongs did not make a right. The charge of inconsistency against the Opposition, however, was a mistaken one. The point of the hon. Member's remarks was that they had said earlier in the evening that the local justices were not the proper tribunal to which to refer matters. But they had never said that. They said on the contrary that they were the proper authorities, but that there should be confirmation of their acts by another authority. They were the proper people to be called first into requisition, but there should be either an appeal or confirmation by some other authority. He was sorry the Prime Minister was not in his place, because he thought he would support the Amendment even if his Party refused to accept it. The right hon. Gentleman was at all events consistent and had in eloquent phrases informed the House that the local justices knew all about the "Black Bull" and the "Red Lion" and were the proper people to decide what houses should be maintained and what should not. He regretted that more hon. Members opposite were not present because he believed, on the whole, they would themselves agree that the proper course to be pursued was to accept the Amendment and allow the local justices some discretion in the matter. After all, that was local option, because the local justices were supposed to represent the feelings of the locality according to hon. Members opposite, and if they did that, why on earth should they not be allowed to say how many public-houses were necessary? The hon. Member for Mansfield had told them he was a local justice and when he went to the justice room to consider the question, he made up his mind that there were too many licences and he was going to reduce them. There was an instance. Did hon. Gentlemen object to the hon. Member for Mansfield deciding whether or not the number of licences in a given area should be fifty-one or fifty-two, or did they prefer that a body sitting in London, with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley as chairman, should decide? He had a great opinion of the right hon. Gentleman and had heard some of the best reasoned and argued speeches from him that he had ever heard, but he did not credit him with all knowledge. He knew a great deal about Spen Valley, but he did not know everything about every other part of England.

*MR. BERTRAM (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) said he only rose to ask a Question arising out of one of the defences that had been made of the Government policy in resisting the Amendment for which he intended to vote. It had been alleged on the part of the Government that there would be a great power of modification reserved to licensing justices and that they were not to be bound by the hard and fast rule set out in the schedule. But it appeared to him that the whole of the powers of the licensing justices in relation to the schemes of reduction were to be subject to an over-riding power vested in the Commissioners. How far was the Government defence a real one? Was there any reality in this power which they alleged resided in the licensing justices, or was it merely an illusory power entirely over-ridden and controlled by the Licensing Commission?

MR. JAMES HOPE said he was not altogether satisfied with the Amendment as it stood and he wished to amend it by inserting after "if" the words "on the presentation of a requisition signed by not less than one-tenth of the parochial electors in the district." He thought there should be evidence of some local feeling before proceedings under this clause were started. The impetus to reform should come not from above but from below, and the justices should have the body of public opinion behind them. It was their business as occupying a judicial position to check and regulate popular movements but not to initiate them.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL asked if it was in order to move an Amendment raising a completely different point. The point they had been discussing was whether the justices should have a discretion. The point the hon. Member now wished to raise was whether reduction should take place on the initiative of a certain number of electors.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: I think the Amendment may be put, although hon. Members must recognise that the debate has altogether been very prolonged.

*MR. JAMES HOPE submitted that there were certain precedents for the procedure which he advocated. He believed that in the Companies Acts there was a precedent for a requisition of one-tenth of the shareholders or of the interests represented. In the Allotments Act there was also a provision that certain machinery should be set in motion on the initiative of a certain number of parochial electors, and in this Bill itself subsection 2 of Clause 2 said—

> "The licensing justices shall cause a poll to be taken on the question of a prohibitory Resolution if a requisition signed by not less than one-tenth of the parochial electors in the district is presented to them requiring such a poll to be taken."

What was valid in one case was valid in the other. If the machinery of this Bill was to be set in motion upon popular requisition the same principle should be applied in regard to the reduction of licences. The popular impulse ought to be the deciding factor in both cases and discretion should not be allowed in the one case and denied in the other. The justices should be allowed to act upon their own discretion, but upon their own initiative they should not be allowed to start a reduction scheme for which there was no popular demand. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

> "After the word 'if,' to insert the words 'on the presentation of a requisition signed by not less than one-tenth of the parochial electors in the district.'"—(*Mr. James Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted in the proposed Amendment."

EARL WINTERTON said he agreed with his hon. friend that something was needed to round off this Amendment. The Government had recognised by their qualifications that there was need in some cases at any rate for guidance by the experience of the local justices, but they had immediately, by making those qualifications subject to the approval of a Commission, of which no one in the House except the Government seemed to be particularly fond, practically sterilised the discretion thus placed in the hands of justices. In this Amendment they were really proceeding along the same line as the Government, apart from the fact that the discretion given by the Government in their scheduled qualifications was not a real one. In his opinion the Amendment really made the system perfectly symmetrical. It had been pointed out several times that the qualifications in the Schedule were really very wide, although they were rendered largely of no avail by the fact that the appeal was subject to the approval of the Commission; still, the fact that the Government put in these qualifications showed that they themselves realised the need in certain circumstances for getting the opinion of the local justices. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking at Manchester last year and referring to the coming Licensing Bill, said that in a Bill which aimed at reducing excessive drinking the moderate drinker must feel that he was safeguarded. He did not agree with the contention put forward by hon. Gentlemen opposite that there could be any real relation between the number of public houses and the amount of drunkenness, but he and his friends did say that there might be isolated instances in which there was that relationship, and if there was anyone who could judge as to whether that relationship existed it could only be the local justices. Therefore, he thought the Government should adopt the Amendment, if only for the reason that they themselves had admitted by the qualification as to licences in rural parishes and health or pleasure resorts, that the justices must be left some discretion.

Mr. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) thought that this Amendment was a most valuable one. He had had some personal experience in regard to these difficulties. On the last occasion when he sat upon the Licensing Bench it was proposed to reduce the number of licences by three. That was not the wish of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and they presented a requisition to that effect. The desire to reduce the number of public-houses in a district might not come from the inhabitants but from some rich man who did not want a public-house near his garden or lodge gate. A similar request might come from the squire of the parish or even from the parson or the attorney, in fact it might come from anybody but the people concerned. He had known public-houses situated miles away from any town, used perhaps chiefly by carters and travellers and a few agricultural labourers, and how could these people get their views represented before the magistrates? If they insisted upon a requisition being signed by one-tenth of the electors as was proposed by this Amendment, that would be some indication to the justices as to whether the public-houses concerned were wanted or not. He thought the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for one of the divisions of Birmingham would be an improvement upon the Amendment which had been moved by the hon. Member for Sheffield. They had been asked whether the authority of the justices was to be a real or an illusory one. Of course he could not expect an answer to that question from the Government in view of the fact that they had refused to answer a similar question from one of their own supporters. All they wanted to know was what the real position of the justices would be under this Bill.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir S. Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid) said the Government did not mind whether the Amendment was amended or not. All the argument opposite on the original Amendment had been in favour of granting the fullest discretion to justices. This Amendment would restrict that discretion, and it would not be possible for them to act at all unless on the requisition of a certain proportion of the inhabitants. The Government's objection was that it went against their own proposals that there must be a reduction of licences according to the schedule. They would oppose both Amendments.

Mr. JAMES HOPE: My Amendment is purely democratic.

Sir S. EVANS said the Government proposed that there should be a compulsory reduction, according to the modifications in the schedule, by the licensing justices, and, therefore, they opposed the Amendment as they would also oppose the Amendment if amended.

MR. WALTER LONG: I have listened to the reply of the hon. and learned Gentleman with amazement, because in his reply he has entirely ignored the fact that a Member on his own side of the House has directly addressed a question to the Government to which no answer whatever has been given. The hon. Member opposite put a question as to the power to be exercised by the licensing justices. Are those justices to act under the shadow of the Licensing Commission? The question of the hon. Member is: "Are we discussing a sham or a reality? Are the magistrates to do real work, or are they to prepare a sham return to enable the Commissioners to act subsequently?" The Solicitor-General has given no answer to that. He simply says that the Government object to the Amendment because it goes contrary to the way they want to go. I should like to ask how many men on the Government Bench or behind it have sat with a Bench of licensing magistrates. I wonder whether the First Lord of the Admiralty, who treats these matters with great condescension, ever sat as a licensing justice either in a county district or at Quarter Sessions. I venture to say that anyone who has done so with regularity will feel that the discharge of the duty thrown upon him under this Bill will involve the greatest difficulty. I have consulted a great many who have sat, and I have not found one yet who knows how they will have to proceed. I do not like local option at all, and I have never voted in favour of it in any form. I know that circumstances alter cases, but in the difficulties in which some of us find ourselves at the present moment I do not know that local option would not be better than what the Government are proposing. I do not like local option at all, I have never voted in favour of it, but in the difficulties in which the proposed legislation of the Government puts us I confess I have great fellow feeling with my brother magistrates. I protest against casting upon the justices the duty of effecting the reduction of licences without any indication from the locality as to what they desire to be done. In the circumstances the justices would have nobody to depend upon for information except the clerk to the licensing bench. What occurs now? An application is made for the renewal of a licence, or the granting of a new licence, and when opposition is offered by people who object either to the renewal or the granting of a licence the magistrates have something to proceed upon when they are hearing an application, and they sit simply as a judicial body to inquire into the case; but here you are going to throw upon them an entirely new duty. They will have to have present to their minds the whole circumstances in regard to every public-house in their area, and they are not to decide between the comparative claims of different public-houses. How will they decide what particular house they should go for first? Where are they to begin? An application from a locality will be most useful, just as applications are in respect to small holdings and allotments. All that is asked here is not that there should be local option to decide the question, but that there should be, at all events, the right given to the locality to move the bench of magistrates, and to prove that there is a *prima facie* case. I cannot understand why the Government will not accept some Amendment which will define the duty which those unfortunate magistrates will have to perform. If they do not the magistrates will be apt to fail, and the real work will have to be done by the Commission, who will descend upon the locality and override local government and local opinion. If the clause passes without some such Amendment it will be a most extraordinary step for a Liberal and democratic Government to have taken.

MR. ASHLEY opposed the Amendment to the Amendment because it would limit the discretion of the justices. He had already endeavoured to get unfettered discretion for the licensing justices. If the Amendment to the Amendment were accepted it would mean that they would not be able to move a step until one-tenth of the parochial electors had sent them a memorial asking them to move. What possible means had that number of local electors of ascertaining what were the real needs of the locality? His hon. friend's Amendment would be as bad as the Bill of the Government.

MR. JAMES HOPE said the justices would be able to go on reducing licences, even if no requisition was sent to them.

MR. ASHLEY said they would not be able to do anything until one-tenth of the parochial electors asked them to reduce licences. What the Government said was that they should be reduced on a certain principle which was outlined in the schedule.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.) said his constituency considered that the great blot on the Bill was that the power was given to the licensing magistrates, and not to the electors. Heaven forbid that he should say that one-tenth of the votes of the parochial electors on this subject should compensate for a popular vote. It did not compensate for the democratic principle that the locality should have the power of saying how many more, or how many less, public-houses there should be, or whether there should be none at all. But the Amendment would be a very small step in that direction, and he should have thought it incumbent on everyone who approved of popular control to vote for the Amendment to the Amendment.

*MR. CLAVELL SALTER said that this was undoubtedly a local option Amendment, and he could not understand any hon. Member opposite doing other than vote for it. If one-tenth of the parochial electors were prepared to suggest reduction, and the justices were of the same mind, that local initiative would greatly strengthen their hands. If, on the other hand, one-tenth of the electors could not be found who were prepared to suggest reduction, how could any man in his senses say it was right to make a reduction?

SIR F. BANBURY said the Amendment had been advocated by hon. Members below the gangway opposite as a democratic Amendment. He was not sure he knew what they meant. He would certainly support an Amendment that would give freedom to everybody, but he was afraid that "democratic Amendment" meant one by which a number of people would be able to dictate to the rest whether they should have a glass of beer or not. Such an Amendment he could not support. It was the thin end of the wedge. If the Amendment were carried, how could they consistently refuse to support local option hereafter? And he was sure all his hon. friends wished to be consistent. He presumed the Solicitor-General was going to vote in the same lobby with him.

SIR S. EVANS: I am not going to vote at all.

SIR F. BANBURY said he had always voted in one lobby or the other. One ought to have the courage of his opinions.

*SIR FRANCIS LOWE said he did not see his way to accept the Amendment to the Amendment. He very much preferred his own Amendment as it stood, because it would give the justices power to act if it was shown to their satisfaction that the number of on-licences in any district was excessive, without reference to the number of people who had first called their attention to the matter.

MR. JAMES HOPE asked leave to withdraw the Amendment to the Amendment.

Amendment to the Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. JAMES HOPE, in moving to insert "full" before "on-licences," said his object was to except the beer-houses of 1869 from the operation of the Amendment, on the ground that they should not be considered in this scheme of reduction, because they stood in a different position from full on-licences. The owners of beer-houses give up their Parliamentary title to their licence in 1904 on condition that these were put on the compensation provision, and, therefore, it was not fair that they should be included in the general number of licences which were to be dealt with. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed to the Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, before the word 'on-licences' to insert the word 'full.'"—(*Mr. James Hope.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: On a point of order, I wish to know whether the acceptance or rejection of this Amendment would at all affect the specific Amendment in regard to beer-houses which comes on later, put down on the Paper by the hon. Member for Liverpool. It is a very important point, and should be dealt with separately and adequately. I, therefore, wish to know whether the insertion of this word will prejudice the later discussion.

MR. F. E. SMITH said that he had on the Paper an Amendment which dealt with the 1869 beer-houses, which appeared to raise precisely the same point made by his hon. friend the Member for Sheffield.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he did not quite grasp whether the hon. Member wanted to move an Amendment to the Amendment or to amend the Bill.

MR. JAMES HOPE said that his Amendment was an Amendment to the Amendment.

MR. ASQUITH: I understand that the proposal of the hon. Gentleman is to insert in the Amendment the word "full," after the words "the number of."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My only point is evidently a question as to whether this Bill should apply to all licences or only to full on-licences. That is a very important point, and I want to know at what stage it should be raised.

MR. JAMES HOPE said he would not press his Amendment.

Amendment to the proposed Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 121; Noes, 310. (Division List No. 204.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,RtHn.SirAlex.F.
Arkwright, Sohn Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G(Winchester)
Barnard, E. B.
Barrie, H.T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.Worc-
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Arther
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S.
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.
Fardell, Sir T, George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G, A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope,James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras, E.
Lockwood,Rt.Hn. Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Col.Charles W.(Evesham
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin,S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lupton, Arnold
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm.G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorge D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford,East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G. (Oxf'dUniv
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)

Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Francis Lowe and Mr. Lane-Fox.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Wiliams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick Willliam
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hn. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
M'Callum, John M.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)

Parker, James (Halifax)
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Sir Robert J. (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, Sir John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt Hn. Sir Thomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Earl WINTERTON moved to insert after "justices" the words, "Unless they certify to the Secretary of State that it is unnecessary to do so." His object, he said, was to give the Government one other chance of adopting the principle of local option and trusting the justices, and under those circumstances he hoped the Amendment would be accepted by the right hon. Gentleman. He would not detain the Committee in enlarging upon the matter, but would content himself with saying that he objected altogether to a scheme which reduced the licences in this harsh and arbitrary fashion. But if such a scheme was adopted at all, it was the local justices on whom the duty should fall.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'justices' to insert the words 'unless they certify to the Secretary of State that it is unnecessary to do so.' "—(*Earl Winterton.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. ASQUITH said the noble Lord's Amendment raised very neatly the question whether reduction should be discretionary or compulsory. In the opinion of the Government, the House decided on the Second Reading that it should be compulsory. They could not accept the Amendment, and he hoped the House would decide the question now, once for all.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said the House decided on the Second Reading that it would go on to the Committee stage and discuss the details of the Bill. How it could be said to have decided the important question whether reduction should be dealt with by the justices or by some other authority passed his comprehension. He hoped the discussion would not be continued on this Amendment, but he must say the Prime Minister's answer ran totally counter to all the traditions of the House, and would practically make the Committee stage of a Bill perfectly illusory.

MR. F. E. SMITH drew attention to the statistics available in order to assist the Committee in coming to a decision as to whether it was better that this should be compulsory or discretionary. The licensing statistics of last year showed that where the number of licensed houses per 10,000 of the population was larger there was a greater proportion of convictions for drunkenness. He would take the three counties Northumberland, Durham, and Glamorgan. In Northumberland in 1907 there were 146 convictions per 10,000 of population, and in Durham 101. On the other hand, in the two counties in England in which there was the largest number of licences, there was the fewest number of convictions, viz., 15 convictions of drunkenness per 10,000 of population in Norfolk, and 19 per 10,000 of population in Bucks. There were 60 licences per 10,000 of population in Norfolk and Bucks as against 20 per 10,000 in Northumberland. The four counties in which there was the largest percentage of convictions had the smallest number of licences. Was the Government in face of these facts going to close the door upon discretion, and say to the justices, who, for years, were their own creatures and pets, that to-day they preferred the view of a bureaucracy and triumvirate sitting in London? There was no object at all in the Government's proposal except that they did not trust the local justices. If they trusted them, they would infinitely prefer men of the localities deciding whether the scheme was for the benefit of their districts than men who had no local knowledge at all. When the question whether there was to be any appeal was raised they were told that there was no occasion for it, because the justices had a much better local knowledge than the Quarter Sessions. Yet they would not give them any discretion here, because they preferred the views of a number of doctrinaire bureaucrats in London to those of the men on the spot.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: On a point of order, I said just now I rather hoped this discussion would not go on, but that was under the impression that the matter might be more conveniently raised under "shall" and "may." I should like to know whether it will be possible to discuss "shall" and "may" if a vote is taken upon this Amendment or if this Amendment be put from the Chair and negatived. If "shall" and "may" cannot come in under those circumstances it is manifest that the discussion which would legitimately be raised on "shall" and "may" must be taken out.

MR. ASQUITH: I submit that upon the Amendment we shall already have discussed the whole question of discretion throughout.

*THE CHAIRMAN: In reply to the question of the right hon. Gentleman, I certainly do not think that if the present Amendment is negatived we can discuss the question on "shall" and "may." This Amendment seems to me to dispose of it.

SIR F. BANBURY said his hon. and learned friend the Member for Liverpool was not, he thought, quite as sharp as usual. He had asked what the answer was to the Amendment. There was no answer, and that was why the Prime Minister made the extraordinary statement he made a few moments ago. He had been sixteen years in the House, and he was a fairly regular attendant, but he had never before heard a Member say that an Amendment in Committee could not be discussed because the principle had been accepted by the Second Reading. He would suggest most humbly that if this was to be the new principle which was to govern the House of Commons there would be no need for a guillotine Motion. They only decided by divisions, arguments were not to be put forward, and the House of Commons was to be reduced to an automatic machine for registering the decisions of the Government. He would like to know what was the real objection to the Amendment. It seemed to him wise and useful. It would give power to the local justices to consider whether or not the needs of the locality demanded fifty public-houses or forty-nine, and, under those circumstances, he failed to see why hon. Members opposite could not accept it. It seemed to him to contain a principle which had been advocated throughout the whole of the discussion.

He hoped it would be supported, and, if his noble friend went to a division, he should certainly vote with him.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Having regard to your ruling, Mr. Emmott, I think this Amendment becomes one of the most important we have to consider in the course of the Committee stage of the Bill. I am sorry that we have to enter upon it so late in the evening. Its importance is not a matter of dispute. Hon. Gentlemen opposite attach as much importance to refusing all discretion to local justices as we attach to giving it them. They attach as much importance to laying down arbitrarily a scale dependent upon population as we attach importance to having a scale varying with the necessities and character of the locality. The Prime Minister in the course of the earlier debate attempted to stop us from raising the contention that such an arbitrary reduction of licensed houses as he proposed would not lead to the promotion of temperance by saying that that was the basis of the Act of 1904, and that those who voted for the reduction contemplated by that Act were logically at any rate prevented from contending that there was no connection between the number of houses and the amount of drunkenness. That is a position I rise to challenge. I entirely dispute the justice of the parallel which the Prime Minister attempted to draw between the procedure under the Act of 1904 and the procedure under this Bill. The essence of the Act of 1904 was that those who were locally cognisant of the circumstances should inquire and decide whether reduction was necessary, and, if so, what houses should be closed. The essence of this Bill is that Parliament, which does not happen to be cognisant of the circumstances of any particular locality and which neither has any local knowledge nor is capable of receiving, nor has the means of collecting, any evidence which would put it into possession of local circumstances, shall arbitrarily declare for the whole country that the number of licensed houses shall bear a certain proportion in each locality to the population. Instead of this Bill being founded on the Act of 1904 it is the very contradiction of the whole principle and spirit of the Act. Consider for a moment what the position is in regard to the numbers of public-houses compared to the density of the population in the area as a test of how many licensed houses are required. Take a country village with a small population. It is quite conceivable that one house of the requisite size may serve the whole population, and according to the scale which you have laid down one house may be all that is allowed. [Cries of "No."] Where is the provision in the Bill which says no village should have less than two public-houses?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The Bill does not require the number ever to be reduced below two.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. Member, I think, is talking of something different from what I am. He is talking of the number of houses in a licensing district—

> "Where the number of on-licences in any such parish or area does not exceed two, and it appears inexpedient to reduce the number below two."

That is an exception engrafted on their scheme. I really think it is intolerable that the Prime Minister and the Under-Secretary, who refuse to discuss the Amendment in speech themselves, and who, when they do speak, are very intolerant of any interruption, even reasoned interruption, from this side, should continue to give interruption across the floor of the House.

MR. ASQUITH: We only ask that before the right hon. Gentleman criticises our Bill he should read it.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Prime Minister's interruption is scarcely courteous. We have not been accustomed, in whatever part of the House we sat, to be discourteously interrupted by the Leader of the House, who, by his position, ought to be more careful——

*THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. Members not to interrupt. The question on which the right hon. Gentleman was speaking, though it was a matter of opinion, was not a matter in which he was transgressing the rules of order.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I was saying that the Prime Minister ought to be more careful than any other Member of the courtesies of debate. I have read the right hon. Gentleman's Bill and I am attempting to discuss it under such limitations as the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to allow. I was saying that the section in the schedule to which the hon. Gentleman called my attention is a modification engrafted on the scheme of the Bill. It says—

> "Modifications may be made in the strict application of this scale where the number of on-licences in any such parish or area does not exceed two, and where it is inexpedient to reduce the number below two."

I do not think that as it stands it carries the Government case very much further. It does not seem germane to the argument which I was originally stating, which was that in a particular village, which need not in itself comprise a parish, there might be two public-houses, that one of these houses might be all that was allowed under the schedule, and if it were big enough and in all other respects suitable, it might be sufficient for the needs of the place. What guarantee have you that it is big enough, or that it is a legitimate place of business, or that the business which has hitherto been done in two houses may be compressed into one, and what justification have you for depriving people of all choice as to what house they will go to? I am tired of listening to declamation from that side of the House about the hardship which is inflicted upon those who frequent public-houses by having to go to places which are tied, and where they can only get one particular class of liquor. Have you ever considered how much by this Bill you are limiting their choice, how much you are adding to their difficulty of making a selection, and if they do not like the treatment or the liquor they get at one place, of going to another to get it? Now I invite the hon. Gentlemen who interrupted me to follow the advice of their Leader and read the Bill and the Amendment, and compare the two. But it is not merely a question of accommodation. It is a question of suitability in other respects. The public-house is subject to the springing into existence of the class of club which none of us wish to encourage, and it is and must remain the club of a great portion of our population. Consider for a moment the case of public-houses regarded as clubs. They are not merely places where a man goes for drink, but where he goes to meet congenial society and to discuss the public questions of his locality or of the nation. That is the way we use our clubs to a large extent in London. I have not the least doubt that if the Government lays down a scale of clubs necessary to the population they will find that Pall Mall, Piccadilly, and St. James's are very much overcrowded, and that all members of the Turf Club can be accommodated at the Athenæum. On the other hand, it might be that the Athenæum might be closed, and the Bishops and Cabinet Ministers would wish the use of the Turf Club instead. As long as you put it that way you will see that there are two different societies, and it does not follow that those at the Athenæum want to associate with those at the Turf Club or those at the Turf Club with those at the Athenæum. It is exactly the same with the public-houses. The right hon. Gentleman said that it did not matter whether you close the "Red Lion" or the "Black Bull," but I should like to point out that the society which frequent two public-houses may be entirely different and distinct. There may be no excessive drinking in either of the public-houses, and yet you may inflict quite an unnecessary and unmerited hardship by forcing all those people to use one public-house irrespective altogether of their desire to have decent accommodation. When you say that by applying an arbitrary rule of that sort you are promoting temperance, I say that you are doing nothing of the kind. In particular where you have an excess of public-houses you may by an arbitrary reduction secure some amelioration of the difficulties, but in the great mass of cases where there is not that gross excess where each house suits a particular trade, then I say that by an arbitrary reduction you do not promote temperance at all, but you inflict a great hardship upon individuals, and that hardship falls not merely upon the licence holders, but also upon those who have been in the habit of frequenting the houses and have in fact used them as their clubs. If you attempted to put any such regulations to the facilities which are offered to hon. Members in this House, I am sure you would not get this Bill through at all. That fact alone shows, if anything is needed to show it, that the procedure under this Bill is class legislation of the most arbitrary kind, applying restrictions and conditions to the poor man's life and legislative interference which would not be tolerated by hon. Members in circumstances of their own.

Sir S. EVANS said they had just listened to a very extraordinary speech from the right hon. Gentleman, in the course of which he had discoursed upon every topic which might be properly discussed in the Second Reading debate. From the commencement to the end of the right hon. Gentleman's speech he had been wondering whether he had actually read the Amendment before the Committee. They had had a discussion upon the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Edgbaston as to whether the justices should have a discretion or whether they should be compelled to make the reduction provided for in the schedule. It might be that the right hon. Gentleman's speech had been prepared for delivery upon another Amendment, but at any rate there was not a single word in it which showed that he had even looked at the Amendment on the Paper. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to class legislation and he very nearly went the length of saying that they were proposing to rob the poor man of his beer. He had also introduced the Turf Club and the Athenæum Club and the "Red Lion" and the "Black Bull." He would remind him that the Amendment was—

> "Unless they notify to the Secretary of State that it is unnecessary to do so."

He asked the Committee whether any argument the right hon. Gentleman had used had any reference to that point. He contended that it had not. The Amendment in itself was a very small one, and raised very neatly the point of the discretion which had already been sufficiently discussed and determined in the division on the preceding Amendment. He hardly needed to say that under the circumstances the Amendment was one which the Government could not accept.

Lord R. CECIL said the hon. and learned Gentleman began his speech with a gibe fashioned upon the model furnished by the Prime Minister, and he trusted that the Prime Minister would now see how dangerous his lapse from manners had proved. [Ministerial cries of "Withdraw."] It was to him a matter of profound indifference how much hon. Members opposite cried out "Withdraw." [Renewed Ministerial cries of "Withdraw" and Opposition cries of "Chair, Chair."]

*The CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. Members not to interrupt. [Cries of "Name."] I hope they will not continue to cry out "Withdraw." [An Hon. Member: Why not?] Because the noble Lord had not said anything that I can call upon him to withdraw. At the same time I may say that I should deprecate any continued discussion of the question of manners.

Lord R. CECIL said that, of course, he would not pursue the subject, in deference to the suggestion made from the Chair. All he desired to say on that point was that he thought the Opposition had been treated with the greatest possible provocation that evening. The Solicitor-General in dealing with his right hon. friend had stated that his speech had no bearing on the Amendment at all. He could not imagine why the hon. and learned Gentleman said that. He had listened as closely as possible to his right hon. friend, and, in spite of the interruptions to which he was subjected by hon. Gentlemen opposite, he had argued that the desirable plan of giving discretion to the justices should be adopted instead of the plan of fixing a hard and fast limit in the Bill itself. He had illustrated that by the reference to the clubs in Pall Mall. It appeared to him, with all respect to the Solicitor-General, that what his right hon. friend said was absolutely germane to the Amendment. The Prime Minister himself had laid down in the single sentence which he had contributed to the debate, that the whole point of the Amendment was that it raised the question whether it was desirable to leave discretion to the justices, or to fix a limit by the Bill itself. He confessed on that question it did not appear to him to be open to doubt that it was far better to leave it to the discretion of the justices. He did not think that anyone who read the Bill and the schedule could fail to see how exceedingly clumsy and difficult it would be to work the opposite plan. The Bill proceeded on the theory of fixing a hard and fast limit, and then when the Government found that that would work profound and obvious injustice, they inserted in the schedule a number of far-reaching exceptions to make it workable. He could not imagine why hon. Members opposite, believing as they did in the local justices, should not be willing to give them full discretion to enable them to do real justice between one public-house and another, and between one public-house and the population. That appeared to him to be the true way in which legislation should proceed, and, believing that, he should certainly support the Amendment.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS said that hon. Members opposite talked about reading the Bill, but it appeared to him that, so far as the representatives of county constituencies were concerned, they could not have read the Bill. Otherwise they would not consent to such an injustice to the labouring population of the rural districts as they would inflict by voting against this Amendment. If hon. Members would look at the first schedule of the Bill, and then consider the areas over which the population was spread, and the number of licences allowed, and further if they would remember, that taking the rural districts alone, there were a large number of counties in England and Wales in which there were only 200 to the square mile, in other counties only 100 to the square mile, and a few with only fifty to the square mile; and if they would work that out and see the distances which the heads of families would have to walk for a glass of beer, they would see that it would be impossible for these men to have it. [Laughter.] Yes, that would please the prohibitionists, and he had no doubt it would please some hon. Members opposite; but would it please the rural population to have public-houses closed in this wholesale manner? He was aware that there were certain modifications, but if they examined them they amounted to nothing in the way of doing away with the evils against which the Bill was directed. At present there were a number of public-houses scattered over an area where men could get not only their glass of beer, but an evening chat, and have all the advantages which others enjoyed in their clubs, within easy distance of their homes. He challenged any hon. Member opposite to dispute the statement that if this Bill passed as it stood without giving the justices discretion, they would practically put it out of the reach of rural labourers in sparsely populated places to have any enjoyment whatever. [Laughter.] Hon. Members laughed at the idea of the enjoyment of labourers in the rural districts. He contended that they had not many enjoyments, but the principal one was to go in the evening and sit down with their fellows over a glass of beer. The events of the day were talked over at these meetings by men who knew what they were talking about. It would be difficult for those who knew the rural districts to say that these poor fellows had many enjoyments except the evening talk over these matters in the public-house. As for getting drunk, first of all they could not afford it, and in the next place he did not know that they had any particular propensity that way. The amount of excessive drinking in public-houses which they were about to abolish was very small. The men in the rural districts went to the public-house not for drink but for social enjoyment. Although hon. Members opposite were silent, they should bear in mind that what they were going to vote for in the division on this Amendment—and he was prepared to prove it—was the depriving, practically, of the rural labourer of the enjoyment which he had at present. It would be utterly impossible for a man when he had done his day's work to walk three or four miles to meet his fellows and have a glass of beer with them. To get his pipe and glass to which he had been accustomed, it was evident that the distance would be too great for him to walk. What right had they in the Houee of Commons, a large proportion of whom had cellars and servants and had only to ring a bell and have what they wanted at their own time, to destroy the occasions for enjoyment which people in the rural districts now had? That might not be the idea of enjoyment which the right hon. Member for Spen Valley had; but perhaps he had some little enjoyment of his own which he would not like to have taken away. There never was such a tyrannous proposition made under the name of temperance and democracy. An hon. Member had said that it was almost a crime to take a drink. Well, if that were so, do not let him take it. Perhaps he would be a better man if he did take it. At any rate this introduction of religion into the question was anti-Biblical, because all through the Scriptures they were taught how good it was to take something to drink. The good Samaritan when he found the stricken Jew by the wayside poured wine and oil into his wounds. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley and the Member for Appleby would in this case pour in ginger-beer or some stuff of that sort. But instead of paying the 2d. for the poor man's treatment in the inn out of their own pocket, they would take it out of the publican's pocket to discharge the debt. [Interruption and cries of "Vote."] But the question did not seem to meet with favourable discussion in this House. It would, however, be discussed in the rural districts where the clause would bear most hardly. If he represented a rural district, and if he voted for the rejection of the Amendment he should find it tremendously difficult when he met a dozen or so of labourers in the neighbourhood who were in the habit of enjoying themselves in a public-house—legitimately enjoying themselves with their pipe and their glass—to explain to them why he had cast his vote to destroy the possibility, in a large number of cases, of their having such enjoyment. What did this Amendment mean? It meant that the licensing committee should have some discretion. They knew very well—or if they did not, nobody else knew; certainly no body in London—whether it was well to have a public-house in a certain district, and they knew—they were the best people to know—exactly the number suited, not only to the population but to the situation of that population. In the districts of which he spoke there might be 100 to 200 people to the square mile; and that was the case in the rural districts of above forty counties in England. But there were counties where instead of 200 there would not be fifty people to the square mile, and what a distance they would have to travel for a glass of beer. The matter was not regulated by the number of adult men; but by the number of the population all told, so that the men who wanted a public-house would be a fifth of the whole number or less, and this sparseness intensified the hardship. Therefore, it would be seen how utterly impossible it would be under this Bill for them to have this enjoyment. He called it enjoyment, and hon. Members opposite had no right to take it away. If hon. Members opposite who represented rural districts—he knew that their motives were all right, and that they did not wish to inflict on others that which they would not stand if inflicted upon themselves—were to go to their constituents and explain to them—not perhaps in a public-house, but in a meeting called for the purpose—what this Bill did without the Amendment, they would see what answer they would get. There was a class of public-house which as a licensed house did not pay but the holder of which had some other occupation. By means of that additional occupation he was able to have a licence, and perhaps in the evenings he would have in half-a-dozen of the poor people who lived in the neighbourhood who could enjoy their glass of beer or cider, and use the house as a club, in fact. Were not these people, who had their troubles and anxieties, and perhaps a large family of ten or twelve children, to have some enjoyment, somewhere to go and smoke their pipes? This was in many cases the only pleasure and recreation they had, and those who were going to vote against this Amendment were going to deprive them of that enjoyment which now existed. He appealed to the Prime Minister to accept the Amendment. If the right hon. Gentleman would not he would recommend him to adopt a Resolution which would save a great deal of time, namely, that the Bill should now pass. He could carry that with the closure, and the thing would be done.

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

EARL WINTERTON: Why do not you put the whole Bill?

CAPTAIN CRAIG on a point of order asked whether in view of the Government having applied the closure it would be in order for them to discuss the words "may" or "shall."

*THE CHAIRMAN: I will answer the point of order, but it really should not have been put until after the division is finished. It will not be in order now to discuss "may" and "shall." I have already given my decision on that point.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 298; Noes, 122. (Division List No. 205.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David (MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies,Sir W.Howell(Bristol,S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.Sir W.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W. Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King,Alfred John(Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster

Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J. M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk,Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs)
Robertson,SirG Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick,B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E (Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,Rt.Hn SirThomasP
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M‘Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barnard, E. B.
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt Hn J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.

Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lupton, Arnold
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 124; Noes, 290. (Division List No. 206.)

AYES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barnard, E. B.
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm)
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robt. (Lanark, Govan)
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berekley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North

Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt.Hon. C.B. Stuart-
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc.)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazelton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk Bg'hs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
M‘Callum, John M.
M‘Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M‘Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)

M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northant s)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F.(Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M.(Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Owen C.(Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A.W.H.
Price, Sir Robert J.(Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, Sir John H.(Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T.(Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G R. (Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W.Dudley (Southampton
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Rt.Hn.SirThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W.(St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. McKinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES--Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

MR. ASQUITH: I beg to move that you do report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

MR. BALFOUR: I suppose it is understood that we do nothing else to-night?

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir.

Committee report progress; to sit again to-morrow.

BUILDING OPERATIONS AND ENGINEERING WORKS BILL.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 20th July; *Mr. Secretary Gladstone*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 243.]

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 21*st July*, 1908.

SAT FIRST.

The Lord Dunmore (*E. Dunmore*)—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Dover Graving Docks.

Also the Certificates that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills:—Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Confirmation; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]; Bognor Gas Light and Coke Company Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Magee Presbyterian College (Londonderry) Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. Ordered that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Blackburn Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Manchester Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Gosport Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment.

London County Council (Money Bill).—Reported, without Amendment.

Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill; South West Suburban Water Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to, with an Amendment. The said Amendment considered, and agreed to.

Board of Trade (Provisional Orders) Bill [H.L.]; now Provisional Orders Procedure Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Amendments made. Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. [No. 167.]

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

USK FISHERIES PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

WYE FISHERIES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Moved, "That the order made on the 25th day of March last, 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, I notice that three Members of the Government have precisely similar Motions on the Paper, and while I have no desire to be unfair, I think the House should be given some explanation why it is proposed to dispense with the Sessional Order. The understanding hitherto has always been that when this indulgence is asked of the House, some explanation should be given of the particular circumstances which render it necessary. I do not know anything of the circumstances in this case and do not desire to oppose the Motion, but I should be sorry if the suspension of Sessional Orders became a mere matter of form.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, perhaps I may say a word generally on the Motions standing on the Paper. In each case I have had the advantage of seeing the reasons why it was desirable that this Sessional Order should be dispensed with, and I am bound to say that the reasons put forward have commended themselves to me. In several cases the reason is that in another place these Bills have not been considered at that period of the session when I think they ought to have been considered. The Government Departments concerned are, therefore, face to face with the alternative of losing their Bills altogether, or of asking your Lordships to dispense with the Sessional Order, so that the difficulties which have arisen in another place may be overcome.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): I presume the noble Lord is satisfied with that explanation?

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: Yes. But I think the explanation ought to have been made by the member of the Government moving the motion and not left to be extracted from the Lord Chairman.

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bills read 2ª accordingly and committed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 9) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 11) BILL.

*LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, I have a similar Motion to that which has just been agreed to on the Motion of my noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture. I do not know that I need make any statement in moving it, except to say that the matter has been thoroughly gone into by the Lord Chairman, who is satisfied as to the reasonableness of the Motion in this case.

Moved, "That the order made on the 25th day of March last, 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the 18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bills be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Allendale.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to and Bills read 2ª accordingly and committed.

MARRIAGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

THE LORD STEWARD (Earl BEAUCHAMP): My Lords, I ask leave to move the suspension of the Sessional Order in this case. Your Lordships will readily understand that in connection with provisional orders dealing with marriages considerable archæological inquiries have to be undertaken and examinations made of various registries, all of which take time. I have the details with regard to these various churches with me if your Lordships care to hear them. I understand that the noble Earl the Chairman of Committees agrees to the Sessional Order being suspended in this case.

Moved, "That the Order made on the 25th day of March last, 'That no Provisional Order Confirmation Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after the

18th day of June next,' be dispensed with, and that the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Beauchamp.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and Bill read 2ª accordingly and committed.

PETITIONS.

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (MERCANTILE CORPORATIONS AND COMPANIES) BILL [H.L.].

Petition in favour of; of the mayor, aldermen, and councillors of the Metropolitan borough of Lewisham; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

HOUSE OF LORDS (MANUSCRIPTS).

Message from the Commons for copy of the manuscripts of the House of Lords, Volume IV. (New Series).—Ordered to be communicated accordingly.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Report on the research work of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in relation to the plaice fisheries of the North Sea; Vol. I. Special Statistics. Size and Weight, 1905–1906.

TRADE REPORTS ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 4066. France (Consular District of Lyons).

No. 4067. China (Yeng Yueh).

No. 4068. France (Trade, Commerce, and Agriculture of Consular District of Calais).

No. 4069. Portugal (Madeira).

No. 4070. Germany (Trade and Industry of the Grand Duchy of Baden).

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH MUSEUM, AND MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY, JERMYN STREET.

Regulations relating thereto.

EXPLOSIVES ACT, 1875.

Thirty-second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, for the year 1907.

ALIENS ACT, 1905.

Return of the alien passenger traffic between the United Kingdom and ports in Europe, or within the Mediterranean Sea, during the three months ended 30th June, 1908; together with the number of expulsion orders made during that period, requiring aliens to leave the United Kingdom.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS AND PESTS ACTS, 1877 AND 1907.

Order, dated 17th July, 1908, entitled The American Gooseberry Mildew (Kent) Order of 1908.

COMPANIES (WINDING-UP).

Seventeenth General Annual Report by the Board of Trade under Section 29 of the Companies (Winding-Up) Act, 1890.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST).

The Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Amendment (No. 1) Warrant 1908, dated 2nd July. 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXTENSION OF FACILITIES) BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food, and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail. Was presented by the Lord Lamington; read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 163.]

NURSES REGISTRATION BILL.

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

LORD AMPTHILL: My Lords, I understand that several noble Lords wish to speak on this Motion. I think, therefore, it would be more convenient if I reserve what I have to say until I have heard the criticisms which I believe are to be made.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee."—(*Lord Ampthill.*)

*The Earl of MAYO: My Lords, it will be remembered that the Second Reading of this Bill was taken in a very thin House, and that Lord Stanley of Alderley's Motion to adjourn the Second Reading debate was withdrawn on the understanding that those who desired to speak on the Bill should have an opportunity of doing so on the Motion to go into Committee. I observe that His Majesty's Government have drafted a series of very important Amendments, which I understand from the noble Lord who is in charge of the Bill are for the benefit of the Bill. But I regret that by one of the Amendments Ireland is cut out. I do not know why the nurses of Ireland should be deprived of the advantages of this measure. They would benefit very largely under the Bill, especially nurses employed in out-of-the-way parts of Ireland who deal with the poorest class. We shall, I suppose, when we get into Committee, hear the reasons for the actions of the Government on this particular point.

I quite realise that the question of registration is a contentious one. I have in my hand the memorial that was handed into the Committee of the House of Commons by the Chairman of the Central Hospital Council, in which it is stated that there are many nurses, matrons, medical men, and others engaged in hospital work who are opposed to registration. The Amendments now put down will, I think, protect the public from unskilled persons being able to act as nurses, and the benefit to the trained nurse, who is alleged to be placed at a disadvantage through the employment of imperfectly trained persons, will be incalculable. The noble Lord in charge of the Bill stated on the Second Reading that he had in his hand the records of a number of very serious cases of women who had posed as nurses, but had been convicted before the magistrate of malpractices. I have here on the seat beside me many newspaper cuttings dealing with these cases, but I think it is needless to go into them. They are disagreeable cases to mention, and I do not think the present is the time or place to deal with them. But the requirements in this Bill for registration will, I am convinced, prevent these unqualified people from acting as nurses again.

I have on the Paper a rather drastic Amendment, which I shall move when we go into Committee. It is to insert the following new clause—

> "(1) Any Court before whom a registered nurse is convicted of any offence and ordered to be imprisoned without the option of a fine or to suffer any greater punishment, shall cause particulars of the conviction to be endorsed upon the certificate under this Act held by such registered nurse, and shall also cause a copy of those particulars to be sent to the council. (2) Any registered nurse so convicted shall produce his or her certificate under this Act within a reasonable time for the purposes of endorsement, and if he or she fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanour."

If this Amendment is agreed to magistrates will be able to endorse certificates in cases of improper conduct, and this will be the means of driving black sheep out of the flock. I think it is a very great safeguard, though, perhaps, your Lordships may consider it too drastic a remedy. The fact that His Majesty's Government have acknowledged the importance of this measure by so carefully preparing Amendments leads me to suppose that the time will come when the measure will become law; but I do not suppose there is any chance of its passing this session.

Lord AMPTHILL: Oh!

*The Earl of MAYO: The noble Lord disagrees with me, but I think it is obviously impossible that the Bill should become law this session, owing to the congested state of public business in the other House. Great good, however, will be done by a full discussion of the matter. I must press for an explanation as to why Ireland is cut out of the Bill. The district nurses in the poorer parts of Ireland are real angels of mercy in those districts. I do not think your Lordships have any idea of the enormous amount of valuable work they do. I think it can be said, in the case of many out-of-the-way parts of Ireland, that they have been the means of civilizing those districts. I have myself been through the district in and around Belmullet, and can personally testify that the nurses there are in favour of this measure. I hope, therefore, that Ireland will not be excluded, or, if it is excluded, that some sufficient reasons will be given.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I think it will be convenient if, before we go into Committee, I make some general statement with regard to the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards this measure. Those of your Lordships who are interested in the measure will have observed that a bulky sheaf of Amendments has been placed on the Paper in my name, but, of course, on behalf of the Privy Council. I think that to attempt to deal with those Amendments *seriatim* in the form in which they are would be an exceedingly lengthy and a rather confusing process. The course which I suggest, therefore, is that, when the House goes into Committee, these Amendments, and, perhaps, some others—there are, I think, two in the name of Lord Mayo—should be accepted *en bloc* with a view to the Bill being reprinted so that their effect can be made clear. The Bill could then be recommitted and considered in that form at some future time. As the matter stands now, it would be a very tedious and difficult process to go through the Amendments and explain the purport of each. I might, however, state at this stage what the general effect of the proposed Amendments is.

In the first place five clauses are struck out of the Bill, thereby getting rid of the arrangement for a provisional council, which seems to us unwieldly and unnecessary. The next important set of Amendments reduces the council to the number of fifteen, the number mentioned in the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, so arranged as to hold the balance between medical practitioners on the one hand and nurses on the other. The two professions will have six representatives each, the remaining three being appointed by the Privy Council. The third set of Amendments provides for the representation of the Local Government Board on the council, and secures that their responsibility for the training of nurses in Poor Law institutions should not be interfered with. The fourth gives power to the Privy Council to amend rules submitted by the nursing council, and the fifth provides for the payment of a small annual fee as a condition of the name being kept on the register. Then there is an Amendment which is not on the Paper, but which I propose should be included for the purpose of discussion, dealing with the means by which nurses can get on the register. The next Amendment exempts Ireland from the application of the Bill. On that perhaps I may say a word. The exemption of Ireland is, of course, only provisional, because Ireland might be included at any time by Order in Council. The Irish Local Government Board are indisposed to apply the Bill to Ireland at present for administrative reasons, into which I confess I have not closely looked. Therefore, it is clear that the exclusion of Ireland can only be regarded as provisional, and those noble Lords and others who object to the exclusion of Ireland will, I think, do well, before the Bill comes up again, to state their views to the Irish Local Government Board with a view to the reconsideration of the question. It is, of course, purely an Irish question, and it is one upon which those who represent the Government here would not desire without very strong reason to override the Irish Department. Therefore, noble Lords like Lord Mayo and others should make their representations on the subject to the Irish Local Government Board. The last set of Amendments provides for the creation at the end of four years of a separate register of associate nurses having a lower standard of training—a point also recommended by the Committee. I hope the course I have suggested may commend itself to the House.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, as the noble Earl opposite has stated, I withdrew my Motion for the adjournment of the Second Reading debate on the understanding that an opportunity for discussion would be afforded at this stage. I did not interpose as an opponent of the Bill, but rather as a friendly critic. I think that the

Amendments which the noble Earl the Leader of the House has placed on the Paper will make the Bill a much more satisfactory measure. At the same time there are one or two points to which I should like to call the attention of the House.

In the first place, I do not think the noble Earl is justified in claiming that this Bill will prevent possible scandals in the future through persons not properly qualified acting as a nurse. There is no provision in the Bill to prevent anyone practising as a nurse; all that the Bill does in that direction is to prevent a person using the title of certificated and registered nurse. I have received a document from the Society for the Promotion of the State Registration of Nurses, in which it is set out how a woman who, though not trained, got employment and went mad. But hospital training and even registration are no protection against madness.

While I have not the slightest objection to classification, I am very glad that the noble Earl proposes to take out the stigma of "qualified" and "unqualified" from the Bill. If you are to secure a good class of nurses, registration of their initial qualifications will not do much for you. I think that was very strongly pressed on the Select Committee of the House of Commons by Mr Holland and other prominent people connected with the London Hospital. The really essential thing to know is what a nurse has done since her training rather than during her period of training. The Queen Victoria Institute of Jubilee Nurses, which has done more than any other institution to promote good nursing, are strong advocates of this Bill, but they recognise that even the high training which will be the basis of the certificate is inadequate in some cases. This Institute spent, according to their last account, £3,817 on what they describe as district training superinduced upon the hospital training of the certificated nurse. None of that would appear in this certificate; yet they find that this further training is necessary for the cottage practice of the district nurse.

There are different classes of nurses. There are those who attend the well-to-do and people who have important operations performed by eminent surgeons. Then there is the organisation, through county associations, of nurses for the poor—district nurses. These nurses, though they come in with little or no medical or nursing training beforehand, are generally sent for a year to Plaistow and places like that to study midwifery and other matters qualifying them to visit the poor in their homes. At this moment, under country associations, there are 540 of these nurses working up and down the country, independent of fully-trained nurses; and these nurses get, what is most important, a continuous system of inspection. Every county appoints a Jubilee nurse as a sort of superintendent of these nurses. They are carefully watched, the Queen Victoria Institute recognising the importance of continuous inspection after the nurses have obtained the certificate. I find that last year in England and Wales they spent over £2,000 on inspection.

Do not let us deceive ourselves by thinking that this Bill is going to be the panacea which some people think. It will only be a guarantee of a certain amount of initial training. Both the highly trained and humbler class of nurses are needed; and I was very glad to see by the last Amendment on the Paper that the noble Earl contemplates another certificate for that type of nurse especially required for the ordinary ailments of the poor. The very highly-trained nurse gets impatient at the routine and commonplace of nursing among the poor, and the humbler women who do this work are often better qualified for it than the highly trained, if under proper supervision. I am glad there is to be a recognition of this class of nurse also, but I regret that by one of the noble Earl's Amendments the creation of this subsidiary register depends on the goodwill and recommendation of the council. The council to be created by the Amendment is better than the council in the Bill as it stands, but I think too much importance is given to the nursing element and not sufficient importance to those who have to judge of the qualities of the nurse.

The Select Committee recommended that the place of examination for nurses at the beginning should be the nursing school. I think any one who has taken the trouble to read carefully the evidence of the Select Committee will see that the great nursing schools, especially in London, play an important part, and ought to be duly considered in any question of examination and registration. I, therefore, regret that there is no recognition of nursing schools as such. I was looking the other day at the constitution of the Board for the certification of midwives, and I find that it is not made up mainly from midwives themselves, but from persons more competent to judge of what is adequate training. I should like to see the independent side of the council in this Bill somewhat strengthened, though I admit the change as proposed is immensely for the better. I have not made these observations because I am in any way hostile to the Bill. It is impossible that the Bill can become law this session, and, therefore, I hope that, after it has been reprinted with these Amendments and fully discussed in Committee later, the Government will bring in an agreed Bill next year on these lines which could be passed as a non-contentious measure. When we consider that so great a name as that of Miss Florence Nightingale is to be found among the critics of the Bill as it stands, it is clear that the question is not quite so plain and simple a one as some people imagine.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, may I supply one omission which I made by inadvertence? I omitted to state that among the Amendments there is one to Clause 20, making a small fee payable by every registered nurse in respect of registration.

LORD AMPTHILL: How much will the fee be?

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Half a crown. That is a novelty to which I ought to have drawn attention.

LORD ASHBOURNE: My Lords, the Amendments that have been placed on the Paper by the Government indicate that they have given careful attention to the matter, with every desire to put the Bill in a shape that will commend it to general approval and meet some of the objections taken in different directions to its clauses. I think the course indicated by the noble Earl a prudent one. After the Bill has been reprinted with the Amendments incorporated, the House will be in a better position to judge of the effect of the Amendments. I have read them with close attention; and am disposed to think that the Bill will be largely improved by the Amendments, with many of which I find myself in entire accord.

I do not propose now to say anything with regard to the details, but it would be unbecoming that I should pass by without any reference to the proposal to exclude Ireland from the operation of the Bill. I cannot for the life of me understand why that step was proposed. The noble Earl stated that the Local Government Board in Ireland felt that there was some administrative difficulty. Why should there be any administrative difficulty? What is it? The Local Government Board are not troubled with hospitals and do not control nurses, except in the case of infirmaries; and, with the exception of a few letters that would have to be written by somebody in the office a few times a year, no labour would be thrown on the Department. I cannot conceive why the nurses in Ireland, persons of high character who have gone to great trouble and expense in becoming thoroughly trained, should be excluded from the advantages to be found in this Bill.

Ireland has suffered a great deal in the past by these exemptions. When the Midwives Act was passed some years ago Ireland was omitted, to the great detriment of a highly-respectable class in Ireland who are now compelled, in order to get their qualification, to come over to England. It is true that power is taken to enable an Order in Council to extend the Bill to Ireland and to make the slight changes necessary in order that that may be done; but why should not Ireland be included in the Bill straight away? I am sure I shall not lack support if, when this measure comes forward again, I move an Amendment replacing Ireland in it.

LORD AMPTHILL: My Lords, the noble Earl who leads the House has rather taken the wind out of my sails, if I may say so. I think the understanding was that I was to wait for criticisms and then say what I had to say; and I had arranged privately with the noble Earl that I would make the proposal to him that the Bill should be dealt with in the particular way he indicated.

THE EARL OF CREWE: I am afraid I must have misunderstood the noble Lord.

LORD AMPTHILL: I hope it is permissible to explain that the suggestion was my own. I was going to make it to the noble Earl, and he was going to accept it. However, it comes with much more force from the noble Earl, and I am encouraged to hope that your Lordships will accept it. There are one or two matters of detail to which I should like briefly to refer. I am in the pleasant position of being able to accept all the Amendments of the Government, with a few reservations. I recognise in them an earnest of the goodwill of the Government, and an evidence that they are prepared to treat the Bill seriously and to do their best to help the promoters make it a thoroughly workable measure.

It has been a great satisfaction to me that those who have spoken have recognised that these Amendments do effect considerable improvements in the Bill. I ask therefore to be allowed to agree to those Amendments provisionally—that is to say, without prejudice—so that when the Bill is recommitted according to the arrangement suggested it will be open to me to make a few objections. I can promise your Lordships that those objections will be very few, and they relate principally to the exclusion of Ireland. I cannot help thinking that this exclusion is due to some misapprehension. In the first place, there is no body of nurses who are keener on this subject of State registration than the nurses of Ireland. They have been at immense pains to promote their efficiency, and they had practically the whole of the organised medical profession in Ireland at their back. I cannot help thinking that the noble Earl himself will get into very serious trouble with the Irish Party in the other House if he persists in the exclusion of Ireland. I have very certain information that the Irish Members in the other House have regarded this matter with strong resentment, and the worst of it is that they are putting the blame for what the noble Earl has done upon your Lordships' House. What is being said is that this is simply the doing of the House of Lords, and another instance of the traditional hostility of this House to Ireland. I hope, therefore, that the noble Earl will reconsider this proposed Amendment. We have already had his assurance that it was merely provisional. I assume that it is rather more than that, and I hope the noble Earl will give his very careful attention before the Bill comes up again to the question of restoring Ireland. The other Amendment to which I should have to take exception is the Amendment to Clause 17; but, if we are not going to discuss these Amendments, clause by clause, I need not go into that point.

I now come to the Amendments which have been suggested by other noble Lords. First of all there is the proposal of my noble friend, Lord Mayo. I am afraid that his is an Amendment which I should be obliged to object to. It is framed on the analogy of the law relating to motor cars. That is a very misleading analogy. There is no similarity whatever between the duties of chauffeurs and trained nurses. If you were to do as the Amendment proposes and endorse a nurse's certificate, that would be the end of her career. Supposing a nurse does commit an offence which would render her deserving of being struck off the register, that would be done by the council to be established by this Bill. The effect of the Amendment, therefore, would be to take out of the hands of the council this duty of maintaining discipline, and to put it into the hands of the Civil Courts. I hold, therefore, that the Amendment is out of harmony with the scheme of the Bill as amended by the Government, and one which ought not to be accepted.

The argument used by Lord Stanley of Alderley that no registration would prevent a nurse becoming unfit is old and exploded. Nobody claims that it would. Registration would imply only that at a stated time a nurse had received a certain amount of training and had passed an examination. In no profession is registration claimed to be a guarantee of continuing efficiency. Barristers, for instance, may be unable to keep up their knowledge of the new laws introduced by Parliament, yet they retain their qualification. Similarly, doctors may not be able to keep up with the advance in medical science, but their registration holds good. In the case of nurses there is another consideration, and it is that the training of the nurse is really a matter of technical skill, and technical skill once acquired by long and laborious training is a thing that you cannot lose altogether. To use a popular illustration, it is very much like skating, or swimming, or riding. Once learned you never forget it, although there may be twenty years of want of practice and disuse.

My noble friend suggested that one of the arguments in favour of the Bill was that it would be a panacea for every kind of evil. I do not think that has been claimed by any of the advocates of State registration. The noble Lord made some further suggestions on the subject of inspection, but I think it must have escaped his attention that the Bill provides that the council shall have power to appoint inspectors if and when that course should be necessary. I do not think I need say anything further except to express once more my gratitude to the noble Earl for the very generous way in which he has treated me with regard to this Bill. I fully appreciate the fact that he has given it most careful attention, and has sought to make it a workable measure at a time when he is overwhelmed with a great deal of other important business. I am certain I can speak for all those who are so earnestly advocating State registration when I say that this action on his part will be fully recognised and duly appreciated, and I think it is a good augury for the future and a reason for confidence that this Bill, in spite of what has been said by one or two noble Lords this evening, may even pass into law before the present Session comes to an end.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I think perhaps the most important circumstance in reference to this Bill which has taken place to-night has been the speech of the noble Earl the Leader of the House. There were not very many of your Lordships present when the Bill was read a second time, but those of us who had the advantage of being here listened to the speech on behalf of the Government on that occasion with a considerable amount of interest, for we did not quite know what line His Majesty's Government were prepared to take with regard to this Bill. The noble Earl, however, has made a much more definite statement this evening, and has indicated a much more definite attitude than he did on the Second Reading, because he has, on behalf of the Government, given notice of a large series of Amendments which very much vary the machinery and some of the principal provisions of the Bill. I do not know whether that indicates on behalf of the Government a more favourable attitude towards the Bill than they were disposed to take when it was last under consideration. If it were so, that would have considerable weight with me, because I think a Bill of this sort ought properly to be passed with the assent of the Government rather than by a private Member of your Lordships' House, although my noble friend has every right to be heard on a subject of this kind.

As regards the debate this evening, I do not like to say anything which might disturb the harmony of your Lordships' proceedings, but I must express agreement with many of the criticisms of Lord Stanley of Alderley. I am afraid that many of your Lordships expect too much from this Bill. I listened to the speech of Lord Ampthill, in moving the Second Reading, with very great attention, and I expected that he would reveal to your Lordships a state of things showing that reform was urgently called for, and that he would be able to quote instances and adduce arguments which would show that without the registration of nurses great evils existed and would continue to exist. My noble friend, as he always does, made a very good speech, but he spoke under rather adverse circumstances. Many of your Lordships had left the House, intent, no doubt, upon business. It was about 8 o'clock, and there were comparatively few Members prepared to take part in the debate. Consequently it was quite evident that my noble friend cut his remarks much shorter than would have been the case had the circumstances been otherwise; but I am afraid the effect of it on my mind was that my noble friend did not make out his case—that is to say, he did not reveal any great evils under the present state of things which registration would do away with. He did undoubtedly quote certain scandals that had arisen, but it was pointed out by the noble Earl the Leader of the House on the Second Reading and it has been pointed out again to-day by Lord Stanley of Alderley that none of those scandals would be touched by the Bill.

Lord AMPTHILL: I regret to interrupt the noble Marquess, but my object was to show, not so much that there were evils to be remedied, as that there were improvements to be affected.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I am very glad to have elicited that interruption from my noble friend. I understand, then, that he admits there are no great evils at the present moment which his Bill will remedy, but that there are improvements which the Bill will effect. That is an important statement.

Lord AMPTHILL: If my noble friend is going to treat this as an important statement, I should like to say that I did not state that there were no evils. I said my object was more to dwell upon the advantages which would result from the Bill than on the evils which it would remedy. But there are evils, of course.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Then the evils remain a mystery. The noble Lord thinks that great improvements may result from the Bill. I am not disposed to deny that there may be improvements resulting from the Bill. The noble Lord cited a great weight of authority which he said was in favour of the measure; but I think my noble friend will have recognised by this time that the universal character which he attributed to that support was overstated, for many eminent doctors and others engaged in the training of nurses are opposed to the Bill. I do not deny that there may be improvements resulting from this Bill, but I agree with Lord Stanley of Alderley that the improvements can be very much exaggerated. The truth is that it is impossible to test by means of an examination whether a woman is a good nurse or not. That I have on high authority, and I believe it to be true. No doubt technical qualifications are necessary, but they are not all that is necessary for a good nurse. Indeed they are not the chief part of what is necessary for a good nurse. I heard my noble friend say just now that nursing was like skating, or any other technical accomplishment, which could never be forgotten. I do not think a more misleading statement could be made. The essence of nursing is a matter of continual practice. That is what makes a first-rate nurse and nothing else. It is not like the case of a doctor. You send for a doctor; he gives his opinion, and that is the end of the matter.

Lord AMPTHILL: What about the prescription?

*The Marquess of SALISBURY: No doubt he writes a prescription, if the noble Lord thinks that an important correction. But the qualifications of the nurse are much more important than the technical skill which an examination is designed to ascertain. Her attention is continuing by day and by night. It is in her practice, her conduct, and her temperament, that her most important qualifications are to be sought. While, therefore, I agree that technical skill is essential and that an examination is useful for the purpose of testing technical skill, I submit that you have not then ascertained whether the nurse is a good nurse or not. Therefore, I think the benefits to be derived from this Bill may easily be exaggerated. But if His Majesty's Government and your Lordships think that it is well that the technical qualifications of a nurse should be the subject of registration, I certainly should not desire to oppose that view. The Amendments which the Government have placed on the Paper seem to me to be valuable Amendments, and the few months which will be available before the Bill comes before us again will be useful in securing that a successful and advantageous measure should be the result of the deliberations in your Lordships' House.

*Lord KINNAIRD: My Lords, I think we shall all agree that some improvement has been made by the Amendments which His Majesty's Government proposes to insert, but I do not think they remove the very great blots which are in the Bill. The noble Lord in charge of the Bill adopted the argument, Once a nurse always a nurse. He said they could not forget their qualifications. I venture to think that would not be endorsed by those in charge of many of our large nursing establishments; and before the

Bill is again taken in the autumn your Lordships will probably receive information which will lead you to change your mind and not allow the Bill to go through in its present form. The Bill, even with these Amendments inserted, does not prevent unqualified women from calling themselves nurses and continuing to practice. We shall still have those who are not competent practising as nurses. The only thing is that they will not be able to call themselves registered nurses. Other Amendments will be required in order that hardship may not be done to district nurses. I understand that the period of training in Ireland is only two years. If, therefore, all the nurses in Ireland are to be declared unqualified and uncertificated, that will be a very undesirable state of things. Then I do not think the case of district nurses is entirely protected; and I believe a large number of the best nurses in our largest hospitals are strongly opposed to registration. Even as amended, the Bill is, in many respects, very unsatisfactory, but I hope that, by the provision of further Amendments, it will be made of benefit to all nurses and not merely to a few.

On Question, Motion agreed to; House in Committee accordingly; Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; Amendments made; Bill recommitted to a Committee of the Whole House, and to be printed as amended. (No. 164.)

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POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to Order).

*THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I beg to move the insertion of the new subsection standing in my name on the Paper. It deals with the Amendment of the schedule and increases the power possessed at present of modifying the schedule, which, as pharmacology progresses, is often found a valuable power to possess. The Pharmaceutical Society agree to this Amendment, and I think it is desirable in the interests of the public. It is important to mention that it does only refer to the schedule, and does not affect the substances mentioned in Clause 2 and Clause 5.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'therefore' to insert the following new subsection:—'(2) The schedule to this Act may be amended by adding thereto or removing therefrom any article or by transferring any article from one part of the schedule to the other in the manner provided by Section 2 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, for adding to the list of articles deemed to be poisons within the meaning of that Act.'"—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE: I think the Amendment a prudent and wise one, as it leaves power for elasticity. With regard to the question of extending the schedule to Ireland, I am in correspondence on that subject. I feel there is force in what the noble Earl said on the last occasion, that if I left the matter as it is full power would rest with the authorities in Ireland to adapt the schedule as far as they thought right and graft it on to their own. If I find that that commends itself to those who are most concerned, I will leave the matter as it is.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The next Amendment is in Clause 3, page 3, line 5, after subsection (2) to insert the following new subsection:—

"(3) A registered chemist or druggist may, notwithstanding anything in Section 15 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, take, use, or exhibit the name or title of pharmacist."

This is a matter which really only concerns the registered chemists themselves. By Section 15 of the Act of 1868 this title of pharmacist is reserved to pharmaceutical chemists—that is to say, those who have passed the higher examination of the Pharmaceutical Society. Now, as we know, the title of chemist and druggist is treated no longer as a professional title, but as a trade term, and, therefore, it is desired by the Pharmaceutical Society for the lower class of registered chemist to be able to use the title of pharmacist. The higher class will call themselves pharmaceutical chemists or pharmaceutists. This is desired by the Pharmaceutical Society as differentiating those who have passed even the lower examination from those who are not chemists and druggists, and I think it may very fairly be accepted.

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 5, after subsection (2) to insert the following new subsection. (3) A registered chemist or druggist may, notwithstanding anything in Section 15 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, take, use, or exhibit the name or title of pharmacist."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

LORD ASHBOURNE: I have no objection to the insertion of these words, but perhaps the noble Earl will consider whether the extension of this to Ireland is not a matter upon which he would like to have some opinions.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow, and to be printed as amended. (No. 165.)

WILD BIRDS BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, this is a very short and simple Bill, and one which I think will command the support of all Members of your Lordship's House. The only operative clause is the first clause, which provides that any person who takes or attempts to take any wild bird by means of a hook or other similar instrument shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding 40s. and for a second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding £5.

The case for the Bill is this, that in severe winters a great many of our smaller birds—thrushes, blackbirds, starlings, and birds of that type—congregate near the sea in some of the milder districts of the West of England and Wales. It has been brought to the notice of those who are interested in the preservation of wild birds that a system of catching these birds by means of hooks has grown up in certain places on the coast. A well-known naturalist, who was an eye-witness of what was taking place, records that in the hard winter of 1906 birds were driven down to the coast; and not only did large numbers of them perish of cold and hunger in the fields—which, of course, it is impossible to prevent—but many were driven close to the haunts of population, and some of those who desired to catch them scraped small portions of land free from snow, and by means of baited hooks took a considerable number of birds. The account given is one which cannot possibly fail to awaken sympathy. The description supplied by eye-witnesses is to the effect that so blind to danger were the birds made by hunger that they were not deterred by the frantic struggles of those already hooked.

It seems to me that there is nothing but undiluted cruelty in this method of taking small wild birds. I do not think it is widely taken advantage of, and I am certain it is contrary to the wishes and the feeling of the great majority of the population; but, under the present state of the law, they are powerless to prevent it. I am advised that this Bill will prohibit the practice altogether, and I hope your Lordships will give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Balfour of Burleigh.*)

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, I have to say that His Majesty's Government are not only willing but anxious to do all they can to assist the noble Lord in passing this Bill; and I am quite sure the Scottish Office will also assist in expediting its progress.

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (MERCANTILE CORPORATIONS AND COMPANIES) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair].

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

LORD AVEBURY moved the insertion of a new Clause, the object of which was, he explained, to meet the suggestion made on behalf of His Majesty's

Government during the Second Reading. The clause which he proposed to insert was taken from the Local Government Act of 1888.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 3, to insert the following new clause—'It shall be lawful for His Majesty the King, by Order in Council, from time to time to alter the instructions, precepts, notices, and forms under the Registration of Electors Act, 1888, and any other Act for the time being in force amending or affecting the Acts mentioned in this subsection, and the instructions, precepts, notices, and forms specified in any such Order in Council shall be observed and be valid by law, and clerks of the peace and town clerks and other officers shall act accordingly.'"—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Schedule:

LORD AVEBURY moved to omit the schedule. This was, he said, a consequential Amendment.

Amendment moved, to leave out the schedule.—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 166.)

BOARD OF TRADE (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order.)

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL, who had a series of Amendments on the Paper, explained that they had been drafted to meet a point raised by the Local Government Board. The Public Health Act of 1874, gave to the Local Government Board power to grant Provisional Orders to urban authorities in respect of gas undertakings under the Gas and Water Works Facilities Acts of 1870 and 1873. The procedure of those Provisional Orders was laid down by those Acts. The clauses containing the Regulations would be repealed by this Bill. It was, therefore, proposed in this series of Amendments to extend to the Local Government Board the same powers of making Rules for Procedure in respect of Provisional Orders as were being given to the Board of Trade by the Bill. He begged now to move the first Amendment, but in order to meet any possible opposition from noble Lords opposite to the extension of this principle to other Government Departments, he would like to call attention to the next Amendment which stood in his name, which, he thought, would be found to preserve absolutely the control of Parliament over the rules to be made under the Bill.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 7, after the word 'in,' to insert the words 'Part I. of.'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL then moved the second Amendment to which he had alluded. It was, he said, designed to meet the point raised by Lord Salisbury in the Amendment which the noble Marquess had on the Paper. The noble Marquess was not in his place, but he (Lord Hamilton) had been authorised by him to say that he was willing to accept this Amendment in lieu of the one standing in his name on the Paper. He thought it would be found that by this Amendment the control of Parliament over the rules of procedure was absolutely secured.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 16, to leave out subsection (2) and to insert '(2) Any rules made in pursuance of this section shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament as soon as practicable after they are made, and if either House of Parliament within the next forty days after any rules have been so laid before that House resolves that the rules or any of them ought to be annulled, the rules or those to which the Resolution applies, shall after the date of such Resolution be of no effect, without prejudice to the validity of anything done in the meantime under the rules or to the making of any new rules."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Lord HAMILTON of DALZELL moved the insertion of a new clause after Clause 1.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 1 to insert the following new clause 'This Act shall extend to the Local Government Board as respects Provisional Orders made by them under the enactments mentioned in Part II. of the First Schedule to this Act, with the substitution of a reference to the Local Government Board for the reference to the Board of Trade and with this modification, that sections two hundred and ninety-three to two hundred and ninety-six of the Public Health Act, 1875 (relating to inquiries by the Local Government Board) shall apply to inquiries held by that Board in pursuance of any rules made by that Board under this Act."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2:

Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended agreed to.

Schedule:

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

Title:

Lord HAMILTON of DALZELL moved to amend the title. This, he explained, was necessitated by the alterations which their Lordships had agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In the Title, page 1, after the word 'Trade' to insert the words 'and the Local Government Board.'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell*).

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 167).

COMMONS BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

*Viscount St. ALDWYN moved to omit from this clause, which gave power of making regulations as to the turning out of entire animals on commons, the words "for the purpose of maintaining or improving the breed of animals on a common." He said that as the clause at present stood it was perfectly clear that the commoners would not have the power of altogether forbidding the turning out of entire animals on a common. He was himself acquainted with small commons where the turning out of entire animals would be a public nuisance. Lord Carrington had placed an Amendment on the Paper to insert the words "if any"; but the whole thing would still be governed by the words "for the purpose of maintaining or improving the breed of animals on a common." He therefore hoped their Lordships would agree to omission of those words.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, lines 5 and 6, to leave out the words 'for the purpose of maintaining or improving the breed of animals on the common.'" —*Viscount St. Aldwyn.*

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES (Earl Carrington) said that, in the opinion of the Board of Agriculture, there was no doubt as to the power of altogether prohibiting entire animals from being turned out; but, if the noble Viscount thought there was, he was prepared to accept the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord CLINTON moved to leave out the words "and when made" from the provision that the commoners might "make and when made alter or revoke" the regulations. Obviously the regulations could not be altered or revoked until they were made, and therefore the words were unnecessary.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'and when made.'"—*Lord Clinton.*

Earl CARRINGTON said the noble Lord's Amendment was an improvement, and he was quite ready to accept it.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord CLINTON moved to leave out the words "the times at which and." It was obvious that the conditions must cover the times at which the animals were to be allowed to be turned out. That would be one of the most important conditions, but there would be many other matters to be covered, such as the type, breed, quality, and perhaps size of the animals; and if one particular condition was specifically mentioned it might be argued that other important conditions were excluded. He wished the noble Earl to understand that he had no desire to do anything to weaken the conditions, but rather to strengthen them, so that the commoners might be able to pass all the regulations really necessary for the welfare and safety of the stock on the common.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out the words 'the times at which and.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

EARL CARRINGTON thought the object of the noble Lord would be met by the next Amendment, which stood in his (Earl Carrington's) name. Perhaps, therefore, the noble Lord would withdraw the Amendment.

LORD CLINTON did not think the noble Earl's words would be any improvement on the Bill as it stood. They wished to do away altogether with the mentioning of any particular condition. The condition in question was necessarily included, and they were afraid that to mention it specifically might lead to the supposition that others were excluded.

EARL CARRINGTON asked whether the noble Lord was perfectly certain that his point was not met by the next Amendment.

LORD CLINTON said he was advised that it was not.

EARL CARRINGTON said that, in the opinion of the Board of Agriculture, there was no doubt on the point.

LORD CLINTON accepted this assurance, and withdrew the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

EARL CARRINGTON moved to insert, after the words "make and when made alter or revoke regulations for determining the times," the words "if any." This, he believed, met the objections of the noble Lord opposite.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 12, after the word 'times' to insert the words 'if any.'"—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Drafting Amendment agreed to.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN, who had given notice of an Amendment expressly giving power of "forbidding any such animals to be upon the common," said he would not move this Amendment if the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture was quite satisfied that there was ample power in the clause as amended to forbid altogether entire animals being placed upon the common.

EARL CARRINGTON said he believed the noble Viscount's point was absolutely met.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN said that, in those circumstances, he would not move the Amendment.

LORD CLINTON said that as the clause stood power was given for raising only such sums as might be necessary for enforcing the regulations. He moved to insert words to enable the expenses incurred in making and publishing the regulations to be defrayed. He thought this cost should be provided for.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 20, after the word 'for' to insert the words 'defraying expenses incurred in making, publishing, or.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

EARL CARRINGTON accepted the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD CLINTON moved to insert the words "and for prescribing the person to receive or sue for such payments." The clause provided that commoners might, among other things, raise the sums required for the purpose of making the regulations; but the Bill gave no indication as to who was to receive those sums, or, in cases of non-payment, who was to sue for the recovery of such payments. Hence his Amendment.

Amendment moved—

"In page 1, line 24, after the word 'common' to insert the words 'and for prescribing the person to receive or sue for such payments.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

EARL CARRINGTON accepted the Amendment.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD CLINTON moved to insert the words "being a person entitled to turn out animals on the common." The Bill so far dealt only with persons who possessed common rights, but at this point it went very much beyond that, and endeavoured to deal to some extent with the general public. He did not believe there would be any advantage in bringing the public in in this way, because they were already subject to the provisions of the ordinary law if they turned out animals upon a common, or allowed animals to stray upon a common. The cattle or other stock of a stranger might stray on to the common without the knowledge of the owner; he might be quite ignorant of the regulations made by the commoners; and it seemed somewhat hard that the owner should be exposed to the severe penalty of fourteen days imprisonment for an offence entirely unintentional on his part. This was contrary to the common interpretation of the law, and he hoped the President of the Board of Agriculture would accept his Amendment.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 12, after the word 'animal' to insert the words 'being a person entitled to turn out animals on the common,' and to leave out the word 'any' and to insert the word 'such.'"—(*Lord Clinton.*)

EARL CARRINGTON expressed the hope that the noble Lord would not press the Amendment. It was quite true that outside persons were under the common law, but he did not think the words in the clause would be likely to press hardly on anybody. The mischief done would be the same whether it was done by an outsider or by a person who had common rights. Almost the only persons who would come under the clause would be travelling gipsies and tinkers with their jackasses, and as so much damage had been done in the past he hoped the Amendment would not be insisted upon.

LORD CLINTON said that many other animals strayed on commons besides gipsies' jackasses; and, if the noble Earl did not wish the words in his Amendment inserted, better provision should be made for making the regulations known to outsiders.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN hoped the Amendment would not be pressed, as it would weaken the hands of the commoners in dealing with this matter.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD CLINTON moved to amend subsection (3)—

"A meeting for the purposes of this Act may be convened in respect of any common by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries upon the application of any three persons claiming to be entitled to turn out animals upon the common or of the council of the county in which any part of the common is situate,"

by omitting the words "or of the council of the county in which any part of the common is situate." His object in moving the Amendment was to ascertain why county councils were brought in at all. The matters dealt with under the Bill were entirely domestic concerns. They were matters of interest only to the commoners themselves, and had no connection whatever with the outside public or with the ratepayers or the county generally. The commons which, for obvious reasons, were regulated by the county council or other local authority, were not dealt with under the Bill at all. The Bill dealt solely with commons upon which there were grazing rights divided among a certain number of commoners; yet the subsection gave the county council power to represent to the Board of Agriculture that a meeting of the commoners should be held. The power of calling the meeting rested with the Board of Agriculture, at the instance of three commoners, and he did not think any good could possibly be obtained by placing the county council in the Bill for the one purpose proposed. Even if the county council were successful in getting the meeting called, they had no *locus standi* whatever at the meeting. They could take no part in it; it was a matter of no public concern whatever of theirs; and he thought it a pity that the county council should be placed in a position of petitioners to the Board of Agriculture upon a dispute of which they could have no knowledge at all.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 26, to leave out the word 'common' to the end of subsection (3.)"—(*Lord Clinton*).

EARL CARRINGTON admitted that it was quite true that the matter was one of domestic concern. But when the subject was first brought forward by a deputation introduced to him by Lord Kenyon, the original proposal was that the county councils themselves should make the regulations without the assent of the commoners. It was thought, however, that that would not be the best way to go to work, and that the commoners should move in the matter themselves. At the same time, although county council might not, as the noble Lord had truly said, have any *locus standi*, it would be a pity to cut them out altogether and not give them a chance of backing up the lord of the manor and the commoners in their desire to rid the common of these animals. That was all the power they would have, and he hoped the noble Lord would not press the Amendment.

LORD KENYON opposed the Amendment on the ground that if the matter was left to the commoners themselves, in many cases nothing would be done. He thought it of advantage that there should be a second authority, and hoped the Amendment would be withdrawn.

LORD BELPER said the County Councils Association had nothing whatever to do with the introduction of the county councils into this provision. He did not think the county councils were at all anxious to have powers given them with regard to matters with which they had nothing whatever to do. The county councils had no power to regulate the turning out of entire animals and had no entire animals to turn out; but if there was any reason for the insertion of this provision he had no objection.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW inquired whether the county council would have any *locus standi* at the meeting when it had been summoned by the Board of Agriculture at the instance of the county council. He did not see anything in the Bill providing for that.

EARL CARRINGTON thought the words might with advantage be left in. The provision was simply that a meeting for the purposes of the Act might be convened in respect of any common upon the application of any three persons entitled to turn out animals upon the common, or of the council of the county in which any part of the common was situated.

LORD KENYON again expressed the hope that the Amendment would be withdrawn. He thought that if county councils would occasionally take charge of such things as the improvement of the breed of animals it would be for the mutual benefit of the people concerned.

LORD CLINTON agreed. But no power of this kind was given to county councils by the Bill. All that the county councils were enabled to do was to ask the Board of Agriculture to call a meeting.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord FITZMAURICE) understood that the object of the provision was to provide for cases where, for private or other reasons, the commoners themselves were unwilling to do their duty. The Government thought it would be desirable to give an alternative power of setting the machinery in motion, and the county councils were inserted with that object. He would remind the House that since the passing of the Local Government Act, 1888, such a provision was quite an ordinary thing in cases where minor local authorities or other statutory bodies declined to exercise the powers which Parliament had conferred upon them as a trust for the public advantage.

LORD BELPER did not wish to be misunderstood. He had no objection to county councils being left in; he merely wished to make it clear that it was not at the suggestion of the county councils themselves that they were put in.

*THE MARQUESS OF **LANSDOWNE** could not help thinking that, in the circumstances, their Lordships would do well to retain the words as they stood. Lord Belper, who spoke with great authority on behalf of the county councils, did not raise any objection to conferring this power upon them. On the other hand, it was quite conceivable that there might be cases where the commoners ought to avail themselves of the powers conferred by the Bill, but did not do so, and in such cases it might be very desirable to fall back on the county council, and allow the county council to move the Board of Agriculture to put the Act in operation.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 168.)

CORONERS (IRELAND) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1, agreed to.

LORD **DENMAN** moved to insert after Clause 1 a new clause and a new schedule.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 1, to insert the following new clause 'The enactments mentioned in the schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of the schedule,' and to insert the following new schedule to the Bill—

Session and Chapter.	Short Title.	Extent of Repeal
3 & 4 Vict. c. 108 - -	The Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act, 1840.	Section 156.
9 & 10 Vict. c. 37 - -	The Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1846.	Section 39, from "except" to "District" where the latter word secondly occurs.
23 & 24 Vict. c. 74 - -	The Borough Coroners (Ireland) Act, 1860.	Section 2, from "provided always" to the end of the section.

(*Lord Denman.*)

LORD **ASHBOURNE** said that no doubt the details of the schedule had been considered, but perhaps the noble Lord would say more definitely what the repeals were.

LORD **DENMAN** replied that the Bill affected certain existing Acts, and the Amendment standing in his name repealed those portions of existing Acts which were unnecessary.

LORD **ASHBOURNE** thought that in the Bill before the Committee referential legislation was carried to the maddest point that ever was known. But for the accident of its having a title they would not realise what it was about.

THE EARL OF **DONOUGHMORE** did not think the Amendments in any way jeopardised the usefulness of the Bill; on the other hand he thought they added to its usefulness.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 169.)

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (IRELAND) BILL.

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Clause 7:

LORD ATKINSON moved that Clause 7 be omitted from the Bill. He had, he said, the keenest sympathy with the promoters of the Bill in their efforts to attack the evils in question, but he believed that in this case their zeal had carried them too far. The Bill provided that notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875, where the contract for which damages were awarded under that Act consisted of, or included drunkenness, imprisonment might be ordered in default of payment of damages. The Act of 1875 to which allusion was made enabled the magistrates, as in Petty Sessions, to settle disputes between employers and workmen and to receive contributions or award damages to an extent of £10 with the same powers as were conferred on other Courts by the Debtors Act. It would be contrary to all the spirit of modern legislation to enforce a merely civil demand by imprisonment in default. It would do the employer no good, would not secure in the slightest degree his getting damages, and might mean a serious loss to the workman.

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 7."—(*Lord Atkinson.*)

LORD ORANMORE AND BROWNE said that when he moved the Second Reading of the Bill he ventured to say some small Amendments would be required. Of these that proposed was one, and he had much pleasure in accepting it.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8:

LORD ATKINSON moved to amend this clause which ran—

"Any person who being drunk while in charge of any person or animal, or thing, endangers the life or limb of any person, shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding forty shillings, or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for a period not exceeding one month,"

by deleting the word "thing" and inserting the words "or vehicle, whether the same be drawn by animal power or be propelled by other than animal power." In his opinion the word "thing" was much too wide; it might cover anything—a box of matches for instance. It should be confined as suggested by the Amendment.

Amendment moved—

"In page 3, line 8, to leave out the word 'thing,' and insert the words 'or vehicle, whether the same be drawn by animal power or be propelled by other than animal power.'"—(*Lord Atkinson.*)

LORD DENMAN thought the noble Lord restricted the clause more than was contemplated by the promoters of the Bill. The clause as amended would, as he understood it, restrict that portion entirely to vehicles.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): I sympathise with the noble and learned Lord in not wishing to see words which may lead to an undue application of this clause, but I cannot help thinking that his words are a little too narrow and restricted. The point is that no person is obnoxious except one who, being drunk, endangers the life or limb of any person. That is a condition which applies to every case, and if you get the conditions of a man being drunk and endangering the life or limb of somebody else you need not be too particular as to whether he has a wheelbarrow, or a vehicle or anything else. I cannot help thinking it might be well if the noble Lord would be good enough to withdraw this and consider whether some words a little less narrow than his own might be suggested.

LORD ATKINSON agreed to the suggestion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Standing Committee negatived. The report of Amendment to be received To-morrow; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 170.)

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL [SECOND READING].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD DENMAN: This is a Bill, as its name implies, to improve the housing of the working classes in Ireland. Parliament in recent years has so often confirmed this principle in legislation that I think it is hardly necessary for me at this late hour to deal with that point. But there are special reasons why legislation is urgently needed at this time in Ireland to deal with this matter. First of all, whilst in England in recent years Acts of Parliament have been passed, and whilst, as your Lordships are aware, there is a Bill in another place which will affect housing in England, yet the last important Act that was passed for Ireland was so long ago as 1890; it is true there was a minor Act in 1896 but that of 1890 was the last of importance. Therefore it seems to me that Ireland has some cause for complaint of being excluded in this particular direction. Another reason is that many Irish towns are poor and are highly rated, and unless they are able to receive such financial assistance as is contemplated in this Bill they will be unable to adopt any efficient housing scheme. Thirdly, some Irish towns are—it is regrettable but it is, I am afraid, too true—in a decaying condition. Houses which were formerly occupied by well-to-do people are now occupied by people much less well off and are used as tenements, and are inhabited, I am informed, in some cases by as many as twelve and thirteen families. This brings me to the question of overcrowding, which is a serious evil in the towns of this country, but is, I venture to say, a far more serious evil in towns in Ireland. I would like to quote one or two figures which deal with this point. In Manchester, for example, the perpercentage of one-room tenements occupied by five or more persons is ·04 per cent., in London ·57 per cent., and in Dublin, 8·69 per cent. You will gather from those figures that in this respect Dublin is about fifteen times worse off than London; and as we all know the condition of some of the slums in London leaves very much to be desired, these figures give some idea of what the slum areas in Dublin must be. Again, according to the 1901 census there were in Ireland 79,149 tenements of one-room, and in 5,587 of these one-room tenements seven or more persons resided. In Dublin 40·6 per cent. of the population occupied overcrowded dwellings. These, my Lords, are, I think, rather terrible figures and themselves make out an urgent case for legislation to deal with the question. Another point is the alarming increase in Ireland of the disease of tuberculosis, and although, no doubt, a great deal may be done, and is being done, by the erection of sanatoria and hospitals, by open-air treatment and other methods of combating the disease, yet prevention is always better than a cure, and it is far better to prevent this disease, which must be spread by the slum areas such as I have just described, at its source than to rely on the remedial measures of which I have spoken. Those are only a few reasons why this Bill is needed in Ireland. Now I come to the objects of the Bill. The objects are two-fold. The first is to give financial assistance to local bodies to enable them to provide better housing for the working classes. The second is to amend the procedure to be followed by those local authorities under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890. The first of these objects is attained by getting the sum of £80,000 in cash and £100,000 in Consols from the dormant portion of the Irish Suitors Fund. This is to form an Irish Housing Fund which is to be invested, and the interest will be given to local authorities to help them to meet the cost of carrying out schemes. The second object is attained by extending the provisions of two English Housing Acts, the Acts of 1900 and 1903, to Ireland. I should like to remind the House that this Bill received the unanimous assent of all parties in another place; that Ulster Members and Nationalists vied with each other in giving it a warm welcome and, I understand, in claiming credit for it. There were, it is true, some criticisms passed upon the financial clauses of the Bill, but those clauses have since been remodelled in Committee. They are now of a much more modest character than as originally introduced, and I hope that they may meet with the approval of the House. If, as we continue the discussion of the Bill, difficulties arise I hope they will be such as are capable of being easily adjusted. There has been an example of what can be done in Ireland, and that example has been furnished by a Member of your Lordship's House, Lord Iveagh, in erecting dwellings for workmen. Not only has Lord Iveagh erected, I believe, excellent dwellings for the workmen employed by his firm, but he has gone further than that and in Dublin he has erected many dwellings for the working classes generally. What we hope to be able to do by this Bill is to give local authorities and possibly private persons facilities which will enable them to follow the example which has been set by the noble Viscount to whom I have just alluded. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*Lord Denman.*)

*LORD CLONBROCK: I am sure that everyone who knows Ireland will sympathise with the object of this Bill, for although something may have been done within the last few years, everyone who has travelled much in Ireland must have been struck, in the smaller towns especially, with the condition of the dwellings of the working classes. That condition cannot be characterised as anything less than deplorable, and everyone who is acquainted with such dwellings must wish that steps could be taken to remedy this great evil. But in this, as in all other matters connected with the relief of distress among the lower classes, care must be taken that necessary economy is practised and that no undue burden shall be thrown on the rates, a great deal of which is paid by people in very narrow circumstances. It hardly seems to me that His Majesty's Government have taken this consideration duly into account in accepting the Bill now before the House. There are several provisions in it of rather a striking character. In Clause 2 the limitation imposed on the borrowing powers of local authorities for the purposes of the Housing of the Poor Acts, by the Public Health Act of 1878 has been removed, and, therefore, it would appear that the local authorities, for the purpose of this Bill, are able to borrow to an unlimited amount. To borrow on easy terms is, no doubt, a great temptation to local authorities in Ireland as well as in other countries. It is, therefore, very much to be feared that local authorities would be induced, partially by the most praiseworthy motives, and partially by pressure put upon them, to put an undue burden on the rates. I think we ought to be furnished with a statement in the case of these local authorities as to what amount has been already borrowed, what the limit imposed was, and what balance now remains on which they could borrow. There is another matter which requires attention. In Clause 9 there is a provision exempting all premises, for the purposes of this Bill, from the payment of rates. A proviso to that clause was, I think, inserted on the motion of the Attorney-General for Ireland that this could only be done with the consent of the Local Government Board, and that is, to a certain extent a safeguard. But I would point out that the Local Government Board cannot have the accurate local knowledge needed, and exempting any people or any premises from the rates appears to me to be a very novel and a very strange proceeding. It also appears to me that it would not be to the ultimate benefit of the members of the working classes who happened to occupy a house so exempted. If such a house had been built by some speculative builder on land held from the local authority, the fact of the tenant being exempted from paying rates would probably seem to him a reason why that tenant should pay a higher rent. Therefore, he would gain, and the rates would suffer. With the principle of the Bill I am in the warmest sympathy, but I think it requires amendment on the points to which I have called attention.

*THE EARL OF MAYO: I have nothing to say to the manner in which the noble Lord introduced this Bill, but I have something to say as to the manner in which it was introduced in another place. The Bill was introduced by Mr. Clancy, and was taken up by the Government, and is what is called a starred Bill. Some of the arguments which the noble Lord used with regard to slums in Dublin, I notice by reference to *Hansard*, were used by Mr. Clancy. But I must remind the noble Lord of what he said with regard to everybody consenting about a Bill. I put forward that argument the other day when talking of the 1903 Land Act, and I was met by the noble Earl who leads the House by the statement that when everybody consented we have to be somewhat sceptical as to the working of a measure, and we on this side of the House from Ireland begin to be a little sceptical upon that point in regard to this Bill. The noble Lord talked about the financial assistance that was to be given under the Bill. With regard to the Fund of Suitors in the Supreme Court and other funds, the real truth is that it amounts to between £5,000 and £6,000 a year. I do not think that will help the local authorities very much to build houses. I should like to draw attention to another point in the Bill. I do not think in this matter valuation ought to enter into the question at all. I may point out that under Clause 7, where a local authority has adopted Part III of the Act of 1890, they may for supplying the needs of their district, either establish or acquire lodging-houses for the working-classes outside their district. Now what would that enable the local authorities to do? It would enable them to build labourers' cottages in Rathmines and Pembroke, which are townships outside Dublin. I do not wish to say anything that may be in the back of the minds of Nationalist Members of Parliament, but the real truth of the matter is that if that were allowed to take place it would alter the Parliamentary representation of the South Dublin constituency. That is rather an important point. There are some other points that require consideration. I should like to draw your attention to Clause 9, which proposes to enable the very person who created the rates to get themselves excused from paying them. I think, my Lords, that would require amending. For instance, I should say that the rate should not be imposed on the owner interested in the premises if he could prove that he was not to blame for their becoming occupied by persons not belonging to the working-classes. Again, it seems quite unfair that the local authority should be enabled to impose such a liability without there being a right of appeal from their decision. I think that that argument is understood by the noble Lord opposite. I quite recognise that the Local Government Board will have a say in this matter. We all respect the Local Government Board very much in Ireland, but when they have the power to build labourers' cottages under this Bill outside Dublin, and that fact alters the *status* of the voters in the Parliamentary division, I begin myself to think there is rather more in the Bill than that which the noble Lord impressed so much upon us in his opening speech. For that reason I should like, now that I have the opportunity, to move for a Return for the loans contracted by the local authorities in Ireland. I have given notice to the noble Earl, the Leader of this House that I should make this Motion. Such a Return, dealing with England and Wales, was moved for by Mr. Forster on 14th April this year, in the House of Commons, and the Return was presented and ordered to be printed yesterday; therefore, I think I have a precedent for this Motion. I trust, if I am in order, I may move for it to-day, and, if not, I give notice that I shall, at some future date, move for the Return.

*LORD **ASHBOURNE**: My Lords, anyone who knows anything about Ireland and about the progress of this Bill and debates that have taken place in reference to it, and has listened to the speech of the noble Lord who presented if for your Lordships' acceptance, will realise that this is not only a subject of interest and importance, but one that must command the sympathy of every person who approaches the question with the desire to remedy what is a grave evil. It is impossible not to desire to benefit the working-classes who are subjected to the necessity of living in unhealthy and overcrowded residences, and one would naturally welcome any Bill that proposed to give relief and to remedy such a state of things. Therefore, everyone will recognise that it is not likely that there will be any opposition offered to the proposal to read this Bill a second time. Of course, when we come to another stage it will be necessary to examine some of the clauses to see whether they have been framed with adequate caution, and whether some safeguards and prudential considerations should not be borne in mind before the measure finally leaves your Lordships' House. There is no Treasury aid given to this Bill, which causes, of course, a difficulty about its finance. Usually one expects to get some little assistance from the richer partner, and that some monies will be forthcoming to eke out our more scanty resources; but in this Bill all that is done is to give a power to pass without check the borrowing powers that exist in towns in Ireland—without check and with very little security. Of course, this is a matter requiring examination in Committee. The method of finance is not wide, yet I do not know that it is wide enough. I have no doubt that the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland has seen that the clauses as to the Suitors' Fee Fund were framed in such a way as to safeguard the monies to be taken. I assume that he has been consulted in reference to this matter, and that he has made such suggestions as he thinks right to see that the advances made are duly guaranteed by the Consolidated Fund. On that assumption I say no more about it except this: I am not aware—I do not say it is an objection of serious importance, but it is a matter to be noted—that the Suitors' Fee Fund has ever been called upon to make advances of this kind for such purposes. The other matters referred to by my noble friends who have spoken are matters which I have no doubt we shall hear of in the Committee stage, but having regard to the hour and the further opportunities, I pass them by. I see that Clause 9 has naturally attracted attention. It gives a novel power which everyone would like exercised in his own case of dispensing with the obligation to pay rates for nine or ten years. No doubt that will require attention. If you allow buildings, and give the people who build the power themselves of deciding that the buildings that they own, and have the control of, shall be free from rates—I admit subject to the control of the Local Government Board—it is obvious that that is a matter which needs caution and requires examination, and, therefore, the noble Lord in charge of the Bill will understand that although a Second Reading may be accorded the Bill, that does not imply that some of the clauses will not be fairly and reasonably examined when we come to a further stage.

*LORD DENMAN: If I may say one word in reply to some of the criticisms made, I should like to say that Clause 2, to which Lord Clonbrock took exception is similar to a clause in the English Act of 1903, and that Clause 7 is, I understand, identical with one in the English Act of 1900. With regard to Clause 9, which has come in for some criticism, I should have thought that its provisions were safeguarded by making it necessary to obtain the consent of the Local Government Board, and I was glad to hear form the noble Earl, Lord Mayo, the high tribute which he paid to the administration of the Department. With regard to the return for which he asked I think I can promise that we shall be able to give it to him.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I think it is quite clear that this Bill is one which deserves the very close attention of your Lordships' House before we allow it to become law. It is not a Bill which owes its origin to any action on the part of his Majesty's Government. It is a private Member's Bill which they have taken up, and I venture to think that at many points it shows signs of insufficient consideration. The Bill was, as so many Bills are now, dealt with in the Standing Committee, and our opportunities of making ourselves acquainted with the arguments used for and against it are consequently limited. That the objects of the Bill are commendable objects I do not for a moment attempt to deny, and I am sure the House will do all it can to facilitate the efforts of His Majesty's Government to deal with the question of overcrowding in Ireland. But, when you come to the financial machinery, I think there is much that justifies uneasiness. The Bill, as I understand, enables these local bodies to borrow money outside the limits imposed on them by the Public Health Act. That is a considerable innovation. Unless I am mistaken, in the case of the Labourers (Ireland) Act there are strict financial limits, which borrowers are not allowed to exceed. In this case the councils to which this power of borrowing is given are in most cases dominated by members of the working classes. These bodies are given an unrestricted power of raising money, and, as has been pointed out, in Clause 9 of the Bill we find the extraordinary provision that these councils are allowed to relieve some of the very people who are instrumental in raising these loans. I do not desire to oppose the Second Reading, because I think that would be to create a mistaken view of our action in regard to this question; but I hope your Lordships will come to an understanding that further progress with the Bill shall not be made until after the holidays. The matter cannot really be one of extreme urgency. There is no prospect of very much business coming before us when we reassemble in October, and I think His Majesty's Government would do very well to consider in the meantime some of the criticisms which have been offered. I hope they will not only do that, but that they will supply the information for which my noble friend has asked—I mean information bearing upon the financial position of the local bodies concerned in this Act. If, therefore, we agree to the Second Reading, I hope it will be upon the understanding that the further stages of the Bill are not to be taken before the adjournment of the House.

On Question, Bill read the second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK BILL.

Read 3ª (according to order) and passed.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

REPAIRS OF H.M. SHIPS.

Lord ELLENBOROUGH: I beg to ask the Government if the Returns connected with repairs and alterations of His Majesty's ships which the Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed to produce on the 1st April will be completed and published before Parliament reassembles in October.

The Earl of GRANARD: In reply to my noble friend I think the Return he asks for was promised by the First Lord of the Admiralty. I have inquired when it will be ready, and I am informed that it will be ready for printing by next week. I hope to be able to lay it on the Table of your Lordships' House in the course of the next three weeks or a month.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, AND MILK SHOPS (IRELAND).

***The Earl of ONSLOW** rose to call attention to the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Shops (Ireland) Order of 3rd February, 1908, made with respect to each local authority in Ireland under Section 34 of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1878, and to ask whether powers similar to those exercised by the Lord-Lieutenant can be exercised by the Local Government Board in England; and to inquire what powers the Board of Agriculture have to make tuberculosis a disease under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act; and to ask when the Government intends to introduce the promised legislation with respect to milk; and to move for a copy of the Irish Order of 1908, together with any correspondence addressed to local authorities in Ireland with respect to the said Order, either before or after the Order was made. The noble Earl said: My Lords, many months ago the President of the Local Government Board announced that he intended to bring in a Bill dealing with the question of milk supply, but the present session is drawing to a close, and nothing has been done or heard of the Bill. Now I venture to draw your Lordships' attention to the fact that in Ireland a general Order has been made (not model regulations), but a general Order applicable to and to be carried out by every local authority in Ireland is not very different from a general Act of Parliament applicable to the whole country. I am anxious to know whether the Local Government Board's attention has been called to what has been done in Ireland, and, if so, whether they can inform us whether it is necessary to bring in a Bill, and, if so, when they intend to bring in the Bill and what the nature of that Bill is going to be. I think that in all probability the answer will be that it cannot pass into law during the present session, but even if that be so I think we are entitled to know what are the terms of the measure. It might be very well introduced, if not in the other House, in your Lordships' House. We might be given the opportunity of considering the measure we have been promised and on the faith of which a number of clauses were withdrawn from certain private Bills which dealt with this question in their special areas. I presume that the main object of the Bill will be to diminish the disease of tuberculosis, and I am anxious to know whether the Board of Agriculture cannot do something towards scheduling that disease and treating it in the same manner that they have treated pleuro-pneumonia, cattle-plague, and other diseases that have been stamped out in this country. I am quite aware that in 1889 an Order in Council was made making tuberculosis of the udder a disease under the Prevention of Diseases Act, but that only deals with animals absolutely dangerous to health and does not deal with the question of stamping-out tuberculosis from the herds of this country. I also ask the noble Lord whether the Government will lay upon the Table of the House the Order that has been made by the Local Government Board in Ireland together with a number of very interesting and valuable communications which have been addressed by the Irish Local Government Board to the different local authorities in Ireland, because I think they will form some useful guidance to those of us who are interested in this question, and who are anticipating the introduction of the measure, which I venture to say is long overdue.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a copy of the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops (Ireland) Order of the 3rd February, 1908, together with any correspondence addressed to local authorities in Ireland with respect to the said Order, either before or after the Order was made."—(*The Earl of Onslow*).

*LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, the question which the noble Lord has raised is, at all events in the form in which it is put down, a sort of omnibus question affecting several Government Departments of both England and Wales, but I will endeavour to answer his Question briefly and to the best of my ability. The noble Lord is well aware of the various Acts that have been passed and the Orders that have been made—more so, I think, than I am. Various Acts of Parliament giving powers to the Privy Council and afterwards transferring them to the Local Government Board have brought about the present position. The original Order of 1885, which was made by the Privy Council, is still in force in England and Wales, and this has been supplemented by certain further Orders issued by the Local Government Board in 1886 and 1899, to which I think the noble Lord referred. I have no doubt many of your Lordships are, and I am quite sure Lord Onslow is, familiar with these Orders. The noble Lord asks three questions. First he asks whether powers similar to those exercised by the Lord-Lieutenant can be exercised by the Local Government Board in England. I may perhaps first of all say that there is a difference between the new Irish Order to which the noble Lord has referred and the Orders in force in this country, and the main difference is that the Irish Order incorporates and applies generally requirements which in England and Wales are dealt with by regulations made by the local authorities. The result is that in Ireland these requirements are made uniform and of universal application. In some respects also they are more exacting than those of the model regulations of the English Local Government Board. Then the noble Lord asks whether powers similar to those recently exercised in Ireland can be exercised by the Local Government Board in England, and that I rather take it is the main point of his question. The answer to this is in the affirmative. As the noble Lord knows, there is the General Act of 1878, giving certain powers to the

Privy Council. These powers under a more recent Act have been transferred to the Local Government Board, and I may say that the Board have had before them the question of amending the existing Orders somewhat in the direction proposed, but have deferred doing so for the present in prospect of some general legislation to which the noble Lord has referred and has very justly said has been promised. I cannot say when the legislation on the subject of milk will be introduced, but the Government have it under consideration. I believe the Bill is in a forward state, and it is hoped it will be introduced in the autumn, but as regards that I cannot give the noble Lord a direct and distinct pledge. One part of the noble Lord's Motion deals with the question of the powers of the Board of Agriculture, which is really a matter for that Department, and I venture to think that the noble Lord having been President of the Board probably knows the powers of the Board. But I am advised that under Section 22 of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, the Board of Agriculture have power to schedule tuberculosis as a disease for all or any of the purposes of the Act. As regards Lord Onslow's question as to the Irish Order, I perceive that my noble friend Lord Denman is here, and, I believe, is prepared to answer that question. He tells me, however, that the Return will be given and also the correspondence for which the noble Lord has asked.

*THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK: I cannot say that the reply of the noble Lord has enlightened us very much as to the milk supply legislation. As Lord Onslow pointed out, it is now more than three months since the President of the Local Government Board told us that legislation was going to be brought in, and the Minister for Agriculture so long ago as February last, in answer to a question I put to him in this House, informed us that it was the intention of the Government to deal with this matter during the present session. I cannot say that we know any more now on the matter than we did six months ago, and I think it is only reasonable for us to ask when we are likely to see this Bill and have the opportunity of considering the proposals. I hope the Local Government Board may be able to fall in with the suggestion of my noble friend and print this Bill and let us see what the proposals are. I think it would have been more satisfactory to many of us who take an interest in this question if we had been told what the Local Government Board have been doing in the matter during the last three or four months. We should like to have heard whether this matter has been seriously under the consideration of the Board and whether the Bill is yet drafted. I should also like to ask the noble Lord who represents the Local Government Board whether any communication has yet been made to the Board of Agriculture on the matter, and whether a draft Bill has been submitted to the Board of Agriculture. I should also like to express a hope that if that has not been done, before this matter is dealt with and the Bill is introduced, the draft Bill, or at any rate, that part of the Bill which deals with the production of milk on the farm, and the housing and treatment of cattle, will be submitted for the consideration of the Board of Agriculture. The President of the Local Government Board, when he received a deputation from us not very long ago, told us that it was his intention, as I have no doubt it is, to deal equitably and fairly with the dairy farmers in the country, and, therefore, I think that it is not only desirable, but absolutely necessary that he should consult the Department who are best acquainted with the conditions of agriculture, and to whom the agriculturists in the country naturally look to guard them in this matter. I am only sorry that the noble Lord has not been able to give us further information than that which we have received this afternoon.

*LORD FITZMAURICE: My noble friend who represents the Local Government Board in this House has already addressed your Lordships, and it is only for that reason that I rise to answer the further question, or rather the request for further information, which has just fallen from the noble Lord. What I would venture to point out to him is this: that in reality the main question which the noble Lord, Lord Onslow, has brought before your Lordships by the question which he has placed on the

Paper relates rather to the difference in the working of the existing Dairy and Milkshops Order in Ireland and in England, than to the general question of milk supply, though I quite acknowledge he has mentioned it in the latter part of his question. The first question is esentially one which has always been dealt with by the Local Government Board and not by the Board of Agriculture, and to a certain extent the second also, because the private Bills which have hitherto dealt with certain aspects of this question go beyond the statutory provisions of the Orders made under the Contagious Diseases Animals) Act, 1878, to which you have to go back in these matters. These also are matters which have been hitherto dealt with by the Local Government Board in Bills which have nearly always gone before the Police and Sanitary Clauses Committee over which I had the honour to preside for some years, and that is also why I venture to say a few words on the subject. Now it appears from what has fallen from the noble Lord, Lord Onslow, who, no doubt, was correctly informed, and in that he has been confirmed by my noble friend, that the best legal opinion now is that a great number of things which have hitherto been divided between an Order arranged by the Local Government Board and regulations made under that Order by the local authorities in England and in Ireland, could undoubtedly be done, certainly in Ireland, because it has been done there, by Order alone. It will be seen by anybody who looks at the Order which is going to be laid before your Lordships' House that all the minute things which are done by the regulations of the local authorities in England are incorporated in the Order for Ireland, while if you look at the existing Order as it now runs in England, the main outlines are laid down and are left to be worked out for better or for worse—very often, unfortunately, for worse—by local authorities. The result has been that in some districts of England there has been efficient work, while in some other districts there has been no practical working of the Act at all. No doubt that exists in Ireland even worse than in England, and the result has been that the Irish Privy Council, after taking counsel's opinion, came to the conclusion which I confess is new to me, and I have no doubt to most of your Lordships, that these matters which have hitherto been done by statutory regulation under the Diseases of Animals Act, could all be done by one fell swoop and one large comprehensive Order, which has been issued no doubt with excellent effect by the Irish Privy Council. The matter which the noble Lord brought before your Lordships was whether that could be done in England, if desirable. The answer I understand that has been given by my noble friend on behalf of the Local Government Board is that it could be done. Whether it is desirable is another thing, because nobody would deny that it is a very great act of centralisation, and I could quite imagine that local authorities which have rather sniffed at the notion of county councils being brought into the matter—they are at present entirely outside it—would be rather astonished to wake up one morning and find that the Local Government Board had issued one vast and comprehensive Order laying down rules and regulations for the whole of England, even with regard to details such as the amount of ventilation of cowsheds and the pits into which dung and manure are to be put. Another question which was put at the end of his inquiry by my noble friend was a far larger question as to what the intentions of the Government are with regard to milk legislation. That is an entirely different matter, because the questions relating to milk legislation have not been so much the exercise of the powers of local authorities as the claims of certain local authorities to exercise jurisdiction outside their own limits. That has been a great and burning question, because most of the great outbreaks of typhoid and other fell diseases, which have been traced to milk, have undoubtedly come out of the large towns and been transferred to other large towns and sometimes to country districts. That has been the question thrashed out for years before the Police and Sanitary Committee of the House of Commons. I was fortunate during my chairmanship with the help of the Chairman of Committees of your Lordships' House, the late Earl of Morley, to get certain model clauses agreed upon which worked for a considerable number of years, but several things have happened since then, and undoubtedly the question does require further legislation and the Government have undertaken to legislate. But it is, as I am sure the noble Lord will agree, an exceedingly difficult question, and it goes entirely outside the important, but far less important and less difficult question, whether or not one regulation should be made for the whole of England as it has been in Ireland under the old Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, because in the one case you can act by executive Order while in the other case you undoubtedly require strong and new general legislation.

On Question, Motion agreed to and ordered accordingly.

ARMY OFFICERS AT OLYMPIA.

LORD HENEAGE rose to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War by whose authority officers of the Army were ordered to go to the Olympia and take part in the jumping competitions, and what notice was given to them; whether they were supplied with thoroughly trained horses or ordered to ride any horses supplied to them by the directorate of the show; and whether the expenses of these officers were paid by the War Office or by the directorate of the show.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): The facts of this case so far as I know are that in June the directorate of the Horse Show at Olympia, when they found that there were not a large number of British officers competing, invited on their own initiative a certain number of British officers to enter. They mounted them on horses which had already been entered for the show, and the directorate paid their expenses. That was a thing which they very generously did, not only for British officers, but also, I believe, for a certain number of foreign officers. I think that supplies the information for which the noble Lord asks.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IRELAND).

THE EARL OF MAYO: I beg to move for the following Return, of which I have given notice.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House a return of loans contracted by local authorities in Ireland, with: (1) The amount which they are entitled to borrow under the limitation in Section 238 of the Act of 1878; (2) The amount they have so borrowed up to the present; (3) The amount of the last-mentioned total which would be placed outside the limitation of the Act of 1878 by the present Bill."—(*The Earl of Mayo*).

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I certainly know no reason why we cannot give the Return for which the noble Lord asks, but I should like to assent to it rather on this understanding, that if this Return takes a long time for us to produce, the noble Lord and his friends will not regard it as a necessary preliminary to the passing of the Bill they have read a second time to-night.

Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 21st July, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [Lords]; Leith Burgh Bill [Lords]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP K).

Sir GEORGE WHITE reported from the Committee on Group K. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Monday next, at Twelve of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Reported, with an Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Reported, with an Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Reported with an Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Bill to be considered To-morrow.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Galashiels Drainage and Burgh Extension Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment; Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to:—Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]. Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Acts relating to crofters holdings in Scotland; to amend The Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897; to facilitate the provision of small agricultural holdings in crofting parishes in Scotland; and for other purposes connected therewith." [Crofting Parishes (Scotland) Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Glasgow and South Western Railway." [Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.]

Glasgow and South Western Railway Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Ordered (under Section 7 of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered To-morrow.

PETITIONS.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Aberdeen, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Sudbury (Suffolk), in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Gloucester; Sheffield (Attercliffe) (two); and Stowmarket; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Brynmawr; Burgh; Caldecote; Kingston-upon-Hull; Morecambe; Moretonhampstead; Newhaven; Pontnewynydd; Portsmouth; St. Brides; Silvertown; Sudbury; Wood Dalling; and Wrexham; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of the Sheppey Rural District Council, against, praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INLAND REVENUE.

Copy presented, of Fifty-first Report of the Commissioners, for the year ended 31st March, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COMPANIES (WINDING-UP).

Copy presented, of Seventeenth General Annual Report by the Board of Trade under Section 29 of the Companies (Winding-up) Act, 1890 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 244.]

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Report on the Research Work of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries in relation to the Plaice Fisheries of the North Sea. Vol. I. Special Statistics (Size and Weight), 1905–6 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DESTRUCTIVE INSECTS AND PESTS ACTS, 1877 AND 1907.

Copy presented, of Order dated 17th July, 1908, entitled the American Gooseberry Mildew (Kent) Order of 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4066 to 4070 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXPLOSIVES.

Copy presented, of Thirty-Second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspectors of Explosives, being for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ALIENS ACT, 1905.

Copy presented, of Return of the Alien Passenger Traffic between the United Kingdom and Ports in Europe or within the Mediterranean Sea during the three months ending 30th June, 1908; together with the number of Expulsion Orders made during that period requiring Aliens to leave the United Kingdom [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908, dated 2nd July, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Regulations relating to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bethnal Green Branch Museum, and the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Cost of Public Education in Great Britain, France and Germany.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can give figures showing the total cost of public education, so far as it is met either by national or by local taxes, in the United Kingdom, in France, and in Germany, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I regret that the information in the possession of the Board is not sufficiently complete or up-to-date to enable them to give statistics of any value as to France and Germany. With regard to the United Kingdom, the latest figures are contained in a Return to the order of the House issued on 2nd August, 1906 [No. 305.]

Dividing Societies—Fee for Exemption from Valuation.

VISCOUNT MORPETH (Birmingham, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury why a fee is charged to dividing societies asking for exemption from valuation as a repayment for trouble and expense, whilst no fee is charged to those societies which do send valuations involving as much labour and expense as the examination of applications for exemption; and whether he will take such steps as will prevent the preferential treatment of one type of society from discouraging other societies, on whom the fee is imposed from applying for registration under the Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The noble Lord is wrong in his assumption that the annual returns and quinquennial valuations involve as much labour and expense to the office as the granting of certificates of exemption from valuation. In the former case the labour and expense is borne by the society and in the latter by the office. In the former case the office receives them and uses them for statistical purposes provided they are duly audited or valued according to the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act. In the latter case the office has to examine the rules and the accounts in order to be satisfied that the particular society is one which is entitled to a certificate of exemption. The fee is not obligatory on dividing societies, as it is open to them to place themselves in the same position as accumulating societies by bein valued, and this is in fact done by some of them. The fee is only £2 every five years, and the total cost works out at 8s. a year. The relative numbers of the two classes of societies registered before and since the regulation came in force do not bear out the suggestion of the fee having had the effect of discouraging the registration of dividing societies. I do not propose to take any steps in the matter.

Cost of Transport of Discharged Soldiers in India.

SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether in the present and future years any of the cost of bringing home from India soldiers who have done three years service there, but decline to extend their services for a longer period in that country, will become a charge on the revenues of India; and whether an item under the head of sea transport for troops of £59,246 5s. relates to such return of soldiers, and if it has been charged to the Indian Treasury.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) I understand this Question to refer to Paragraph 5 of the Second Report of the Committee of Public Accounts. The three years men therein referred to are not soldiers who, having done three years service in India, declined to extend their service in that country, but soldiers who, having enlisted for three years service with the colours and having been sent to India, declined to extend their Army service and had to be brought back to this country. The £59,246 5s. claimed from the War Office represents a portion of the extra cost of transport caused by such short-service men having to be brought home and replaced at the expense of the Indian Treasury. Enlistment for three years with the colours has been discontinued. Such adjustments are exceptional, but the matter has not yet been finally closed.

Ennis Urban Council Loan.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will consider the advisability of sanctioning the loan asked for by the Ennis Urban Council for the purchase of the tolls and customs of the town of Ennis.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I have examined with close attention the memorial transmitted to me by the hon. Member for Clare. As I have previously explained to the hon. Member, the Ennis Urban Council have been unpunctual in their repayments of loans, and, though they now declare their readiness to be punctual in the future, they have not resolved to remove the chief cause of their unpunctuality, the late date for striking a rate. I would, moreover, remind the hon. Member that the high rate prevailing in Ennis, amounting to 8s. 6d. in the £, is an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of the loan from the Board of Works, but, if and when the preliminary step of an earlier date for striking the rate is taken, I shall be willing to further consider the application of the urban council for the loan of £2,500.

India—Deaths from Plague—Famine Relief.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state what were the number of deaths from plague, cholera, and small-pox, respectively, in the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, including East Bengal, the United Provinces, and the Punjab for each of the last five recorded years; also the amount spent on famine relief, and the amount of remissions or suspensions of land revenue in each of the provinces named on account of the total or partial failure of crops for each year during the same period.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) With regard to the first Question the hon. Member is referred to the Return (No. 160) of deaths from plague, cholera, and small-pox recently presented, which gives the information asked for to the end of the calendar year 1906. Figures showing the expenditure on famine relief and remissions and suspensions of land revenue for five years ending 31st March, 1907, are subjoined.

Expenditure on Famine Relief.

	1902–3.	1903–4.	1904–5.	1905–6.	1906-7.
	£	£	£	£	£
Madras - - -	—	—	—	6,493	—
Bombay - - -	266,620	109	2,043	24,192	81,671
Bengal - - -	15	—	201	—	56,102
Eastern Bengal and Assam - -	—	—	8	—	7,074
United Provinces -	95	—	—	59,590	128,576
Punjab - - -	1,101	—	—	328	6,291

Remissions and Suspensions.

Remissions.

	1902-3.	1903-4.	1904-5.	1905-6.	1906-7.
	£	£	£	£	£
Madras - - - - -	21,085	31,530	261,511	73,114	33,521
Bombay - - - - -	911,733	163,533	124,200	155,000	164,000
Bengal - - - - -	Not available	10,933	6,267	3,800	3,400
Eastern Bengal and Assam -	3,333	5,533	7,467	5,400	10,800
United Provinces - - -	28,867	123,600	32,533	355,267	197,133
Punjab - - - - -	205,200	16,000	7,733	38,400	64,200

Suspensions.

	1902-3.	1903-4.	1904-5.	1905-6.	1906-7.
	£	£	£	£	£
Madras - - - - -	Not available	4,733	10,267	8,400	4,933
Bombay - - - - -	,,	201,733	352,067	622,467	354,533
Bengal - - - - - -	,,	6,667	8,333	667	133
Eastern Bengal and Assam -	,,	800	6,600	7,667	2,333
United Provinces - - -	68,267	1,400	28,200	38,267	24,200
Punjab - - - - - -	157,067	160,667	118,200	188,200	155,667

Note.—Figures taken from the financial estimates of the Local Governments, with the exception of remissions in Madras which have been taken from the Madras Land Revenue Reports.

Government Clerks at Simla.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if the recommendations of the Committee appointed by Lord Curzon to inquire into the position of the Government clerks who remain in Simla during the winter, and which reported in 1905, have yet been carried out; if not, what is the cause of the delay and what are the intentions of the Government of India regarding them.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The proposals of the Government of India regarding the Government clerks who are permanently settled in Simla, and do not move between that place and Calcutta, have not yet reached me. I will inquire when they may be expected.

India—Governor-General's Council.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what are the emoluments of non-official additional members of the Governor General of India's Council, and what has been the previous calling of the members appointed during the last five years, provided, in case of the latter part of the Question, the required information is available without resort to search.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) A non-official additional member of the Governor General's Legislative Council, who has to leave his ordinary residence and reside at Calcutta for the purpose of attending meetings of the Council, receives an allowance of Rs. 1,000 for each month or part of a month during which he may attend the session, plus a sum of Rs. 1,000 for travelling and other expenses incidental to a change of residence, provided that the total amount paid to a member for any one session shall not exceed Rs. 5,000. These rates also apply to members who may be specially required to attend meetings of the Council at Simla (Article 1146, Civil Service Regulations). The following gentlemen have been appointed since 1st July, 1903:—Tikka Sahib Riperdaman Singh of Nabha, son of the Chief of a Native State. Merchants (3): Mr. F. Cable; Mr. A. A. Apear; Mr. D. M. Hamilton. Landowners (5): Newab Saiyid Muhammad Sahib Bahadur; Sir Ramashwara Singh, Maharajah of Darbhanga; Newab Fateh Ali Khan, Kazilbash, C.I.E.; Newab Bahadur Khwaja Salimulla of Dacca; Mr. Gangadhar Rao Madhar Chitnavis. Lawyers (5): Rai Bahadur Sir B. K. Bose, K.C.I.E.; Dr. Asutosh Mukhopadhyaye; Rai Sri Ram Bahadur: Munshi Madhao Lal; Dr. Rashbehari Ghose, C.I.E. Educationists (3): Mr. Theodore Morison; Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar; Mr. G. K. Gokhale, C.I.E. Retired Civil Servant (1): Mr. S. Ismay, C.S.I. Retired member of the Provincial Civil Service (1): Maing Ba Tow, K.S.M.

Post Office—Headquarters Medical Staff.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the name, age, length of service, medical qualification, salary from imperial funds, and professional emoluments from other sources, of each of the medical staff at head-quarters, male and female.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I do not think any useful public object would be served by obtaining such a Return.

Unemployed Grant to Scotland.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland how much of the grant of £200,000 in the last financial year in aid of the expenses under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, was allotted to Scotland; how it was apportioned as between the various places which received grants; and how much was raised locally in each of these places.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) In reply to the first part of this Question I may refer my hon. friend to the Answer given to the hon. Member for Sutherland on 16th June. As all accounts for the year ended 15th May have not reached the Local Government Board for Scotland, I am unable to state the sums raised by each distress committee. The following are the figures for five of the fourteen distress committees:—

	£
Aberdeen - - - -	142
Dundee - - - -	76
Edinburgh - - - -	598
Partick - - - -	259
Pollokshaws - - -	75

With regard to Glasgow a sum of about £8,000 was collected for purposes of relief, but was placed at the disposal not of the distress committee but of a committee specially created for the purpose.

Conscience Money received by Treasury.

Mr. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the amount of conscience money received by the Treasury during the past five financial years respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The amounts of conscience money received by the Treasury and paid over to the Exchequer in the last five financial years have been—

	£	s.	d.
1903–4 - -	267	18	4
1904–5 - -	1,032	10	1
1905–6 - -	334	19	9
1906–7 - -	1,440	7	7
1907–8 - -	641	16	6

Religion of Police Sergeant at Poyntzpass.

Mr. McKILLOP (Armagh, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether there is any particular reason why the sergeant of police at Poyntzpass is almost invariably a Protestant; and whether, since the principal ratepayers in the village are Catholics, he will consider the advisability of recommending that occasionally a Catholic sergeant should be appointed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The sergeant at Poyntzpass station is a Protestant, but there is no rule that this should invariably be the case. The Inspector-General informs me that the sergeants of the Royal Irish Constabulary are distributed in the way best suitable to the needs of the different localities, and he does not think it desirable to give any pledge as regards appointments to any particular stations. There is no present intention of removing the sergeant now at Poyntzpass, who has given every satisfaction to his superior officers.

Disturbance at Poyntzpass.

Mr. McKILLOP: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that recently a serious attack was made by a number of young men on two Catholics in the Ponytzpass police district; whether any arrests have been made in connection with the affair; whether the police have taken any action in regard to it; and whether he will direct that steps be taken to protect people from molestation by persons who frequent the roads in this district in the evenings with criminal intentions.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) At Armagh Assizes on 7th July, Patrick M'Sherry, a Catholic, was tried for firing a revolver at one Andrew Bicker, in the locality of Poyntzpass, and was acquitted. The defence set up was that M'Sherry and another man were being stoned by a crowd, whereupon M'Sherry fired a shot in self-defence. No person was struck by stones on the occasion, and the police have no evidence that stones were thrown, and consequently cannot take proceedings. I am informed that party feeling is somewhat rife at Poyntzpass, and that the police use all possible efforts to protect each side from molestation by the other.

Volunteer Officers' Decorations.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether officers of sixteen years service and upwards in the Volunteer Force will be entitled to, and will receive, the medal for long service, whether they do or do not transfer to the Territorial Force.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The hon. Member presumably refers to the decoration for officers. The concession of the grant of the decoration after a period of sixteen years service reckoned under the Volunteer Regulations is applicable only to those Volunteer officers who have been unable to join the Territorial Force.

Distress in Glasgow.

MR. R. BALFOUR (Lanarkshire, Partick): To ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the serious distress existing in Glasgow and neighbourhood owing to the depressed condition of the shipbuilding and other trades; and what steps the Government are taking, or propose to take, in co-operating with or otherwise assisting the local distress committees.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am desired by the Prime Minister to reply to this Question. The Government have fully in view the condition of affairs referred to by my hon. friend, and in the event of the Supplementary Estimate now before the House being voted the claims of Glasgow will be fully considered.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Trinidad Dock.

MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will arrange in future that cruisers on the West Indian station should dock at Trinidad instead of leaving their station and steaming 1,500 miles to dock at Bermuda.

MR. McKENNA: The visits of cruisers on the West Indies station to Bermuda are governed by various considerations. When such visits take place, the opportunity is naturally taken of docking any ship which requires it. I will, however, consider my hon. friend's suggestion in case it should be convenient at any time to have a ship docked at Trinidad.

Pembroke Dock Workmen.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will state the number of men employed at Pembroke dock as compared with those employed on the same date in 1907 and in 1905.

MR. McKENNA: The numbers are as follows—

13th July, 1905 - -	2,644
12th July, 1907 - -	1,960
11th July, 1908 - -	1,967

Sale of Obsolete Warships.

MR. A. G. C. HARVEY (Rochdale): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what sum was obtained for each of the ships broken up during the financial year 1906–7; and what was the date of construction and original cost of each ship.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): Appended—

Statement showing prices realised for vessels sold during 1906–7, date of construction, and original cost.

Vessel.	Price realised.	Date of Construction.	Original cost.
	£		£
"Albacore"	1,450	1884	32,783
"Active"	7,300	1871	132,102
"Amphion"	11,500	1885	202,113
"Belvidera"	1,800	1810	38,305
"Bellona"	7,200	1891	91,243
"Brisk"	6,200	1887	86,743
"Boscawen I."	5,800	1860	193,903
"Bulldog"	900	1872	9,059
"Caledonia"	5,400	1810	85,241
"City of Ottawa"	760	Not known.	Not known. Transferred from War Dept., 1906.
"Cockatrice"	3,800	1881	50,218
"Curlew"	3,625	1886	57,348
"Danae"	3,600	1867	70,296
"Drake"	1,400	1875	22,991
"Durham"	4,325	1845	34,190
"Emerald"	5,400	1877	107,424
"Edith"	130	Not known.	Not known. Transferred from Coast Guard Dept., 1869.
"Fanny"	490	1851	9,700
"Formidable"	4,300	1825	64,342
"Greyhound"	2,000	1860	45,177
"Hyaena"	850	1874	10,970
"Iron Duke"	15,000	1871	208,763
"Jackal"	2,375	1845	25,265
"Katoomba"	8,500	1891	116,993
"Leda"	2,100	1828	30,356
"Melampus"	1,650	1820	32,108
"Mercury"	1,375	1826	27,673
"Mildura"	7,200	1891	115,974
"Narcissus"	15,000	1887	265,345
"Nimble"	1,225	1860	21,282
"Pallas"	6,200	1891	137,758
"Pylades"	5,900	1885	82,071
"Pearl"	6,600	1892	146,881
"Peacock"	3,125	1888	40,784
"Pheasant"	2,900	1888	38,563
"Pigeon"	3,500	1889	41,924
"Pitt"	4,025	1816	78,787
"Phœbe"	9,850	1892	138,249
"Redpole"	3,325	1889	40,999
"Ringarooma	8,500	1891	128,738
"Rose"	800	1880	3,896
"Salamander"	3,200	1891	54,117
"St. Vincent"	5,350	1815	110,549
"Skylark"	1,120	1855	9,906
"Seamew"	1,300	Not known. Transferred from Inland Revenue Dept., 1857	9,900
"Sheerness" (tug)	1,150	1859	8,409
"Superb"	19,000	1876	531,846
"Tartar"	5,450	1887	84,457
"Tauranga"	8,500	1891	128,727
"Undine"	1,500	1884	10,000
"Widgeon"	3,325	1890	39,859
"Wye"	2,800	1873	21,500

Torpedo Boats in the Hamble River.

SIR ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any further arrangements have been made for mooring torpedo boats and destroyers in the Southampton Water or the Hamble River, in view of the importance of this matter to yacht owners and fishermen in the present season.

MR. McKENNA: No destroyers or torpedo boats have been stationed in the Hamble River yet, and the question of the suitability of the river for the purpose intended is engaging the careful consideration of the Admiralty.

MR. ASHLEY was understood to say that destroyers had already been in the Hamble River.

Rosyth.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the abandonment of the Rosyth naval base scheme is in contemplation by His Majesty's Government.

MR. McKENNA: There is no intention to abandon the Rosyth scheme.

War Office—Workmen's Bonuses.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, in a contributory pension scheme for the workmen in Woolwich Arsenal and the other War Office Departments, he would view favourably a proposal that his Department should contribute an amount equal to the amount to be contributed by the workmen, and should advance the amount already earned as bonuses by the men as a nucleus for the pension fund

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): It is impossible for the War Department to commit itself to the financial proposition suggested in the Question, a proposition which is quite novel as far as a Government Department is concerned, and I do not think the conditions under which bonuses are earned under the Superannuation Act would admit of advances being made. The workmen at Woolwich Arsenal have more than once put forward pension schemes, but they were all of them actuarially unsound. The War Office has supplied the workmen with actuarial calculations to assist them in formulating a self-supporting scheme and has suggested the lines it might take. If they can produce a scheme, I shall be prepared to consider it sympathetically and to give facilities for its operation.

Suspended Land Revenue in Bombay.

MR. C. J. O'DONNELL (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he can state the amount of land revenue, mentioned at page 11 of the Explanatory Memorandum on East Indian Accounts, as having been suspended in Bombay in previous years of famine and collected in 1906–7; whether, during the present famine in Northern India, the land revenue is being only suspended and not remitted; and whether the demand of large arrears as well as the heavy current land tax, as soon as famine conditions cease, prevents the recovery of the peasantry and is the chief cause of their progressive impoverishment and discontent.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The arrears on account of suspended land revenue in the Bombay Presidency were reduced by £268,000 in 1906–7. With regard to the second question, the Explanatory Memorandum states at page 25 that a large proportion of the land revenue suspended an account of the famine this year and last year, will necessarily be remitted, but it is not possible at present to estimate the amount. Such remissions are made with the object of facilitating the recovery of the peasantry from the losses occasioned by the drought.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) asked if these suspensions did not seriously retard the recovery of the peasants from the effects of famine, by compelling payment in the year immediately following the famine, and whether there was not evidence that this iron system of collection of revenue which should never be collected at all, had really been a contributory cause of the unrest in India ?

MR. BUCHANAN : I am not aware of that, but I may say that suspension is frequently followed by remission.

Dinizulu's Trial.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) : I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is now in a position to make a statement with regard to the composition of the special Tribunal by which it is proposed to try Dinizulu, and to say what law and what rules of evidence will be applied in the conduct of the trial.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby) : I am not yet in a position to make a statement, but hope to be in a position to do so shortly.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) : Is there to be a special tribunal to try Dinizulu ?

COLONEL SEELY : Yes, I have already announced there is to be a special Court, but I am not yet in a position to state how it will be constituted.

Dinizulu's Salary.

MR. MACKARNESS : I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been called to a statement made by the Attorney-General on 3rd June that there was a contract between this country and Dinizulu for the payment of his salary, and that the legal situation showed without any doubt an obligation on this country which he was sure the House would be glad to hear this country did not mean to neglect ; whether this represents the view of His Majesty's Government ; and, if so, when His Majesty's Government intend to fulfil this obligation by paying the arrears of salary due to Dinizulu.

COLONEL SEELY : I need hardly say that the Secretary of State has given the most careful consideration to the opinion which the Attorney-General has expressed that His Majesty's Government are under an obligation to see that Dinizulu receives his salary. His Majesty's Government abstained from taking any action in the matter when they understood that active steps were on the point of being taken to prosecute Dinizulu's claim against the Natal Government by legal action in the Colony. They are not aware of the reason why this action has been so long delayed, but they now consider that a continuance of the present situation, besides being detrimental to the interests of the prisoner, whose resources are almost exhausted, tends to prolong an unfortunate and embarrassing conflict of opinion between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Natal. They are anxious to remove the cause of this difference forthwith ; and they cannot view with satisfaction the prospect of efforts being made to enforce by legal action what they regard as an honourable obligation of the Crown. They have therefore decided that Dinizulu's salary so far as it has accrued shall be paid from Imperial funds, and this House will in due course be invited to vote the necessary sum.

AN HON. MEMBER : Will any steps be taken to recover the amount from the Transvaal Government ?

COLONEL SEELY : I cannot say.

Straits Settlements Sunday Labour Ordinance.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham) : I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if his attention has been called to a Report of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements on the working of the Sunday Labour Ordinance, 1892 ; whether he is aware that this Report finds that this ordinance has tended to handicap British shipping in its competition with foreign shipping ; and, if so, whether he will represent to the Government of the Straits Settlements that this ordinance ought to be so amended as to place British and foreign shipping on terms of absolute equality.

COLONEL SEELY : The Secretary of State has had this Report under his consideration and he is informing the Governor that he will not object to effect being given to the recommendations of the Committee as an experiment.

Chinese in the Transvaal.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the number of deaths among the Chinese coolies in the Transvaal during the month of June, 1908; how many were repatriated during that month; and how many remained in the country on 30th June.

COLONEL SEELY: I understand that twenty-seven died and one was repatriated. There remained 21,636 on 30th June.

Indian Traders in Natal.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is in possession of the text of the Bill dealing with the licensing of Indian traders that is now before the Legislative Assembly of Natal; and, if so, whether he will cause copies of the Bill to be circulated to Members of this House.

COLONEL SEELY: The Governor forwarded a copy of this Bill to the Secretary of State in May, and correspondence on the subject has been proceeding since. I do not think that it is desirable to lay the Bill by itself until the correspondence is complete, but I shall be glad to furnish a copy to my hon. friend if he desires it.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the desirability of laying a copy in the Library to which Members may have access?

COLONEL SEELY: If it is the general desire I will do so.

Sale of Fiji Land.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what are the new arrangements for the sale of land in Fiji; and whether the Government will see that the rights of the natives to the soil of their own country will be safeguarded and respected in every way.

COLONEL SEELY: Papers will shortly be laid before Parliament which will, I hope, satisfy my hon. friend that the rights of the natives have been adequately safeguarded.

Imports of Spirits into Southern Nigeria.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been directed to the great and rapid increase in the importation of spirits into Southern Nigeria, and to the demoralisation and other evils consequent on this traffic; and whether he proposes to take any steps in the matter, and in that case what is their nature.

COLONEL SEELY: The attention of the Secretary of State has been called to this subject. The question of the extent of evils consequent on the traffic is one on which there is a wide difference of opinion among those best qualified to judge, and the Secretary of State proposes to institute a formal inquiry into the matter.

MR. ASHLEY: Is there any duty on spirits going into the country?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, but it is a matter of opinion whether it is prohibitive.

MR. ASHLEY: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of increasing it?

COLONEL SEELY: That is one of the matters which will be considered when the inquiry is instituted.

In answer to Mr. ELLIS—

COLONEL SEELY said Papers would probably be laid, and suggested that another Question should be put as to that in a week's time.

Cairo Sewerage Scheme.

MR. J. M. MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, under the scheme recently adopted for disposing of the sewage of Cairo, the great sewer is to be laid for several miles in the bed of the Jebal Canal which in the Nile mouths supplies water to the districts beyond the village of Matarieh; whether, if so, there is reason to fear that a leakage from the sewer into the canal may some time occur; and whether, in view of the possible risks of this, he will advise the Egyptian Government to give opportunities for public discussion of the scheme before embarking upon it.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I beg to refer the hon. Member to replies returned to Questions asked on this subject by the hon. Member for the Tyneside division of Northumberland on the 16th ultimo and 7th instant. Till I receive the Report for which I have called I can say nothing on the point in question.

Turkish Outrages at Van.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has yet received any information with regard to the atrocities against the Armenian population committed by Turkish soldiers at Katchen or any other places in the neighbourhood of Van.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have had a telegraphic report, founded on information from the Vice-Consul at Van, to the effect that recent events have revealed widespread revolutionary activity and that a large quantity of arms, dynamite, etc., has in fact been discovered at Van. It is stated that there is no reason to complain of the conduct of the Turkish authorities generally, but there were some cases in which the search for arms was conducted with excessive severity, and the villagers at Khatchen complained to the Vali of abuses in connection with it. The guilt of certain Zaptiehs has been admitted by the Vali, and they are being punished. The troops are said to have behaved well with the exception of the Redifs, and attention having been drawn to the matter by Mr. Barclay the Porte has ordered a Special Commission of inquiry into the conduct of the Redifs. I expect a fuller report by despatch.

Persian Troubles at Tabriz.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British Consul at Tabriz refused protection to Persian constitutionalists during the recent repression; and, if so, will be explain why he adopted this attitude.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Admission to the Consulate was refused in consequence of instructions sent to limit the taking of "bast" to cases in which life was in imminent danger. In this case it was desired, apparently, to use the Consulate for political purposes, a proceeding which His Majesy's Government cannot admit, as it would necessitate intervention by force on their part in the internal affairs of Persia. It appears that the political party named in the Question have lately not been repressed, but have got the upper hand at Tabriz.

DR. RUTHERFORD: Is not the action of the Consulate at Tabriz in strong contrast with that of the Consul at Teheran?

SIR EDWARD GREY: No, Sir. At Teheran the action taken was necessitated because lives were supposed to be in danger.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): Is our Consul-General at Tabriz still at his post?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I believe so.

Post Office Savings Banks Forfeited Deposits.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can explain the item, Stock purchased with money received in respect of forfeited deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks (page 86 of Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom); and whether he can explain under what circumstances the deposits were forfeited.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): This stock was purchased by the National Debt Commissioners with money forfeited under the provisions of Section 12 (1) of the Savings Bank Act, 1891. The amount forfeited was in respect of some thirty-one cases reported during the year, where the depositor had more than one Savings Bank account, and the amount in the combined accounts exceeded £200—the maximum on which interest can be credited under the Savings Banks Acts.

Small Holdings Inquiries.

MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can now say what decision he has arrived at with regard to the repayment by the Treasury of the expenses incurred by county councils in ascertaining the demand for small holdings.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: After careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that one-half of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by a county council in ascertaining the demand for small holdings might properly be refunded by the Exchequer. In due course, a proposal to this effect will be submitted to Parliament.

The Imprisoned Suffragettes.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there is in the Prison Department any medical evidence to show that twenty-two and-a-half hours solitary confinement out of every twenty-four hours is conducive to physical and mental health; and, if not, will he order the discharge of all female political prisoners who are subject to such solitary confinement.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The prisoners referred to in the Question have been specially visited by the Medical Inspector of Prisons, and he found no reason to think that the health of any of them has suffered from the conditions of their imprisonment. He has, however, recommended that they should be allowed two periods of exercise instead of one, and this has been arranged for. They will also be allowed to work in association so far as this is found to be consistent with discipline.

Motor Car Speed.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to any inventions for recording the speed of motor-cars and for automatically shutting off the engine and applying the brake at a given speed; and whether he will cause an examination to be made of any such apparatus submitted to him with a view to determining whether it is likely to prove suitable for compulsory use.

MR. GLADSTONE: Several such inventions have been submitted to the police authorities at New Scotland Yard, and have been examined by them, but my authority only extends to licensed public carriages in the Metropolis; and if the hon. Member's Question refers as I understand it to do, to motor-cars generally throughout the country, he should address it to my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board.

Unemployment.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if there have been any precedents in recent years for such a rapid increase in the percentage of unemployment among the skilled trades in this country during the summer months as have occurred during the present year.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The facts in my possession do not enable me to give a precise Answer to the hon. Member's Question, but it is the case that the percentages of members of certain trade unions returned to the Board of Trade as unemployed have recently shown an increase which is unusual at this time of the year.

Mile End Road Tram Dangers.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that, on 15th July at about 6 a.m., a horse was electrified by a live stud in the Mile End Road, severely burned on the flank and forelegs, and would have been killed if he had not been promptly pulled off; and whether he will, in the interests of public safety, withdraw the Board of Trade provisional certificate.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Board of Trade are informed by the London County Council that on the date named a horse came in contact with a stud which was electrically charged, and sustained some slight injuries. The use of the system in operation on the tramway in question has been sanctioned as an experiment for a period of six months from the 23rd ult. If at the end of that period the council desire a renewal of the sanction, the number and nature of any accidents that have occurred will, of course, be a factor in the consideration of the question.

MR. B. S. STRAUS: May I ask whether it is going to be stopped permanently?

MR. CHURCHILL: So far as the Board of Trade is concerned, we have given a provisional sanction for six months, and until this period has expired we can do nothing. Whether the line is stopped permanently or not, I cannot say.

MR. B. S. STRAUS: Cannot the Board of Trade withdraw the certificate?

MR. CHURCHILL: The sanction was provisional in the sense that at the end of six months it must come up for review, and I am informed that we have no power to withdraw it within that period.

Kingston Vaccination Officer's Error.

SIR MAURICE LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the Kingston vaccination officer has sent a notice to Mr. Hubert Bowell, Carisbrooke, Heathfield, Hampton, pointing out that his child will be four months old on 18th July, and giving him notice in the terms of Form Q., in spite of the fact that Mr. Bowell made a declaration of conscientious objection to vaccination which was witnessed by a local magistrate, and posted to the vaccination officer, three weeks previously; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I am informed that a notice in the terms of Form Q. was sent to Mr. Bowell on 23rd June, five days after the receipt of a declaration of conscientious objection which he had made. This was done by inadvertence during the absence of the vaccination officer on his holidays, and he desires to express his regret for any inconvenience to which Mr. Bowell may have been put in the matter.

Distress in Gateshead.

MR. J. JOHNSON (Gateshead): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware of the amount of distress prevailing in Gateshead through unemployment; whether he is aware that the local distress committee have expressed their inability to deal with it, and that the distress committee have opened a fund; and whether to relieve the suffering, he will agree to grant an amount out of the surplus funds voted by Parliament under the Unemployed Act, 1905.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware of the circumstances at Gateshead, and that the distress committee have appealed for subscriptions. The money voted by Parliament last session for the purposes of the Unemployed Workmen Act was for the service of the financial year ending on 31st March last, and consequently no payment out of it can now be made. I may add that there is a strong and united administration by the public bodies in the borough, and that they appear to have matters well in hand.

Milk Bill.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can yet say when the promised Bill for the regulation of the milk supply will be introduced.

MR. JOHN BURNS: It will not be practicable to introduce the Bill unti after the holidays.

Public Health Acts Amendment Act.

MR. J. W. WILSON (Worcestershire, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local

Government Board whether he will state the number of applications received from rural, urban district, and borough councils, respectively, for the adoption in whole or in part, of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907; and also to what number of these the necessary authority has been already given by the Local Government Board.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The number of cases in which I have received applications for Orders under the Act, and in which the formalities prescribed by the Act have been complied with by the local authorities is sixty, made up as follows:—Sixteen in respect of boroughs, forty-one in respect of urban districts, and three in respect of rural districts. Seven Orders have already been issued and the other cases will be disposed of as speedily as possible.

MR. J. W. WILSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that the applications received are not in any way hindered or delayed?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Every despatch is used in advising the local authority in this matter.

Grants to Distress Committees.

MR. CLELAND (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the distress committees in England were informed that no further grants would be made between 31st March and August, and that their final applications for grants to carry on their work until August must be made before the beginning of April.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Early in March last the Local Government Board informed the distress committees by whom schemes of work had been undertaken which might possibly extend beyond the 31st of that month that no payment could be made out of the grant for 1907–8 after that date. The Board stated that it was not contemplated that a payment should, save in exceptional circumstances, be made from the grant in aid of work carried on after the end of the financial year, but they added that if in any case some further payment was needed by the distress committee to enable them to complete any work then in hand for which a contribution from the grant had been made, an application for that purpose should at once be sent to the Board.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): What was the actual time of sending out the Circular intimating that the grants would lapse on 31st March?

MR. JOHN BURNS: 10th March.

MR. C. E. PRICE: Was a like Circular sent out by the Local Government Board in Scotland?

MR. JOHN BURNS: That Question should be addressed to the Secretary for Scotland.

Imported Meats.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what amount of boneless scrap meat was imported into this country during the year 1907, from the United States, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada respectively; what precautions are taken to detect disease in the animals from which the meat is derived or to provide against unwholesome conditions of handling, chemical treatment, and packing in the countries of origin; and whether this meat is inspected after the process of thawing upon arrival in this country, so as to prevent decomposed meat passing into the possession of manufacturers.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Imports of boneless scrap meat are not specially distinguished by the Board of Customs, and hence the amount imported cannot be definitely stated. Some information on the subject and also as to the methods of inspection in the countries of origin will, however, be found in the Report made to the Local Government Board by Dr. Buchanan on Certain Imported Meat Foods of Questionable Wholesomeness, a copy of which I will send to my hon friend. Thawing mostly takes place after the meat has reached its destination in small shops, sausage factories, etc., and in these circumstances it is not practicable to make sufficiently frequent inspections to prevent the use of unwholesome meat. Looking to these and other considerations, I have caused Regulations to be prepared with the object of preventing the importation of meat in the form of scraps which cannot readily be identified with definite parts of the carcase.

Central Welsh Education Board.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether any and what steps have been taken by the Board of Education to deprive the Central Welsh Board of any and which of the powers hitherto exercised by it over secondary schools in Wales.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): The Answer is in the negative.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether it is proposed by the Board of Education to deprive the Welsh Central Board of the powers hitherto exercised by it with regard to the distribution of the Welsh secondary school grants, and with regard to its position as intermediary for the purpose of communication between the Board of Education and the Welsh secondary schools.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The secondary school grants in Wales have hitherto been paid through the Central Welsh Board although the Treasury Grant has always been paid direct, but that body has had no power or discretion as to the allocation of the secondary grants as between particular schools. Similarly, correspondence between the schools and the Board of Education has been despatched through the Central Welsh Board, but the functions of that body were limited to forwarding the Board's letters. The Board decided, with a view to economy and simplicity of administration, and in order that Welsh secondary schools should not be placed at any disadvantage as compared with English schools, that the methods of direct communication adopted in the case of these same schools as regards pupil teacher work and in the case of other secondary schools as regards the whole of their work should be applied in future. Arrangements will, of course, be made, if desired, to secure that the Central Welsh Board shall be supplied with copies of important communications between the Board of Education and the schools.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: Has there been any recent change in the relations with the Board of Education?

MR. RUNCIMAN: There has only been a change in the channel through which communications pass.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board of Education propose to deprive the Welsh Central Board of any of the statutory powers conferred upon it by the Intermediate Education (Wales) Act, 1889; and, if so, under what statute such action is to be taken.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The Answer is in the negative.

The Terrace.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he will consider the possibility of applying a verandah to a small portion of the Terrace, so that Members could enjoy the fresh air even when it was raining.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. L. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): I do not think I should venture to deface the architecture of the Terrace by a verandah, but I might point out to my hon. friend that there is at all times an abundant supply of excellent fresh air in the Chamber of this House itself.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that on most afternoons about five o'clock both Parties cannot agree about the freshness of the air?

MR. L. HARCOURT: Both sides are subject to the accidental passage of gas barges.

MR. HARWOOD: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether any suggestion cannot be carried out without defacing the architecture?

[No Answer was returned.]

Grants for Horse-breeding.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if the Board have taken over from the War Office the organisation of the horse-breeding industry; if the Treasury has given or promised a sum of £30,000 for this purpose; and whether any sum for a similar purpose is to be granted to the Irish Department of Agriculture.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The reply to the first and second parts of the Question is in the negative. The scheme if adopted will apply to the United Kingdom as a whole.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: If any extra money should be granted for this purpose will care be taken that Ireland has its proportionate share?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The hon. Member had better wait till the extra grant is made.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Can the hon. Gentleman say when the scheme will be laid before the House?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: No, Sir.

Allotments.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what number of allotments of over one acre in extent has been applied for under The Small Holdings and Allotments Acts, 1907.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: We are not at present able to give this information, but we shall obtain and publish it in our Annual Report.

Small Holdings.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what approximately is the proportion of applicants for small holdings under The Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907, who desire to purchase their holdings.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Under 5 per cent., so far as our information goes.

Canadian Cattle.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if any representations have been received from the Government of the Dominion of Canada asking that the embargo on Canadian cattle should be removed, and, if so, whether a favourable reply was given to such representations; and whether, having regard to the high price of beef now prevailing and the entire absence of disease among cattle in Canada, any hopes are held out of early action in the matter on behalf of the Government.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Representations on this subject were received in 1905 from the Canadian Government by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and a reply in the negative was given to the proposals made. There is no present intention of introducing fresh legislation on the subject.

MR. FELL: Did the Dominion when making representations on the subject expressly deny there was any disease in Canada?

MR. G. D. FABER (York): Is not the land boundary between America and Canada 3,000 or 4,000 miles in length?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I should like notice of that Question.

MR. FELL: What was the date of the latest communication from Canada? Was it 1905?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I believe so.

Deptford Foreign Cattle Market.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in view of the very stringent regulations now in force at the Foreign Cattle Market at Deptford and elsewhere, which prevent the possibility of any disease being communicated to any British cattle or sheep, and especially in view of the recent rise in the price of butcher meat, which involves hardship to the labouring classes, the Board will at once rescind the ordinance prohibiting the importation of cattle and sheep from the Argentine Republic and other countries for immediate slaugther at the Deptford Foreign Cattle Market and other markets throughout the country, which would enable not only the price of butcher meat to be reduced but these foreign markets to resume their former activity and thereby greatly reduce the ranks of the unemployed; and whether he is aware that, while Argentine and other foreign animals cannot be imported alive into this country, Argentine sheep are regularly imported into Antwerp and a proportion of the skins, heads, plucks, and carcasses of these sheep are brought from Antwerp, admitted without inspection, and sold in England, thus depriving the British working classes of the necessary employment in connection therewith.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): Before the hon. Gentleman answers that Question I desire to ask one or two others. Is it not a fact that, shortly after the last occasion when an order prohibiting the importation of live cattle and sheep from the Argentine Republic and permitting their landing at Deptford was relaxed, two cargoes of animals suffering from foot-and-mouth disease were discovered just in time to prevent their being landed; and whether it is not the fact that so insidious is this disease that no regulation, however stringent, with regard to the control of Deptford Market could afford any guarantee that it would not escape beyond the precincts of the market, and so be spread to other parts of the country? Further——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman had better answer this Question first.

MR. CHAPLIN: May I ask, Sir, whether, after the hon. Gentleman has answered the Question on the Paper, I shall not be permitted to ask him a further Question?

*MR. SPEAKER: There have been already put five or six. It is rather a long catechism.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I may answer the right hon. Gentleman's Questions generally in the affirmative. The statutory obligations of the Board with regard to the importation of animals are such as to preclude the admission into this country of cattle and sheep brought from the Argentine and the other countries scheduled under the Foreign Animals Order of 1903. The adoption of precautionary measure in relation to the importation of hides, offals, etc., has frequently been considered, but it has always been held to be impracticable. No outbreak of disease in this country has been circumstantially traced to such agencies.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I think the time has now come when, as I understand your ruling, I am entitled to put a further Question to the hon. Member for South Somerset, and I should like to ask, in view of the statement that Argentine sheep are regularly imported into Antwerp, if the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Edinburgh was not directly traced to the importation of fodder and hay from Antwerp or its neighbourhood?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: That is so.

Applications for Small Holdings.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he will consider the advisability of instructing county councils definitely to inform all applicants for land whether or not their applications are entertained, and if not entertained the reasons therefor; and further, where refusal follows due to the applicant's lack of capital, the amount of capital deemed to be necessary shall be stated, so that the applicant be enabled to obtain the amount necessary through credit banks or otherwise.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board understand that county councils usually inform applicants for small holdings whether their applications can be entertained or not. The Board do not see their way to adopt the suggestion made by my hon. friend, but they are ready to inquire into any specific cases in which applications are refused, and indeed they are doing this daily.

Gooseberry Mildew in Kent.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can state how many outbreaks of gooseberry mildew have been detected in the county of Kent; in what manner the Board proposes to deal with them; and whether he will undertake that the Board will support any measures, however drastic, which the local authority may consider necessary to stamp out the disease.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Three outbreaks have been detected, and they are being dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the American Gooseberry Mildew Order of 1907. The Board will gladly take into immediate consideration any proposals that the local authority may make with a view to the eradication of the disease.

Congestion in the Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, having regard to the fact that farm lands in the Island of Lewis to the extent of 19,631 acres are not under lease, will the Congested Districts Board communicate with the proprietor with a view to these farms being broken up, especially bearing in mind that the Deer Forests Commissioners scheduled the bulk of this land as suitable for new holdings.

I beg also to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the families of the landless cottars in the Lews represent a population of 7,500, equivalent to 25 per cent. of the inhabitants of the island, will he state why the Congested Districts Board have not secured land for more than thirty-two new holdings and twenty-nine fishermen's dwellings, seeing that there are numerous farms not under lease available.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I may inform the hon. Member I am taking steps to ascertain the views of the proprietor on the subject.

Rate Arrears in the Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is now in a position to state the amount of arrears of rates due by the landlord of the Island of Lewis on 31st March last, and the amount of arrears due from tenants paying over £30 and under £30 respectively.

MR. SINCLAIR: The following is the information desired by my hon. friend—

Rates.	Arrears of Assessment due by.		
	1. Major Matheson.	2. Tenants over £30 Rental.	Tenants under £30 Rental.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
County Rates— (Ross and Cromarty)	1,364 19 4	81 7 7	919 12 5
Parish Rates—			
Stornoway - - -	844 18 10	57 0 9	653 6 3
Uig - - - -	1,550 19 0	66 1 10	363 6 4
Lochs - - -	1,350 11 6	16 0 2	237 5 5
Barvas - - -	752 0 4	26 14 8	845 19 1

A portion of the above arrears has been paid since 31st March last. I have no information as to the particulars of arrears of burgh rates, Stornoway, and they are therefore not included in the above statement.

Scottish Fishery Cruiser.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the last Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland shows that although the fishery cruser "Vigilant" was detailed for duty on the West Coast of Scotland, she was kept fully employed within the Clyde area during the greater part of last year, and only made an occasional cruise to Minch, will he consider the expediency of arranging for the new cruiser to be stationed off the North-west coast of Scotland, especially bearing in mind that during last winter there were numerous complaints of illegal trawling off Gairloch and off the coast of Lewis.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The station of the new cruiser has not yet been definitely fixed. So soon as she has been built and become available for duty the question will be decided according to the exigencies and requirements of the service at the time with due regard to the claims of different sections of the coast.

Mr. WEIR: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the new cruiser will be built? The matter has been a long time under consideration.

Mr. SINCLAIR: No, Sir.

Scottish Banking Laws.

Mr. CLELAND: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state when he expects to be in a position to announce the appointment of a Departmental Committee to inquire into the existing bankruptcy laws of Scotland.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I hope, very shortly.

Scottish Distress Committees.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will explain why distress committees in Scotland were asked by the Local Government Board to put forward final claims before 31st March this year, seeing that they were told on 1st February last year that they were expected to deal with all cases which came before them at any time in the year after the expiry of March.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The 31st March being the close of the financial year it was necessary that all claims should be made prior to that date. The grants distributed prior to 31st March, however, were available for work executed after that date.

Relief of Unemployment in Glasgow.

Mr. BARNES: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that the City of Glasgow had raised more money locally for the relief of unemployment than any other city in the United Kingdom, and, if the money advanced from the local common good fund were included, more than the whole of such other cities; and whether, having regard to that fact, and the further fact that unemployment is more prevalent there than for many years, he will assist, by all the means in his power, in making provision for approved schemes of employment.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I am aware that considerable sums have been raised in Glasgow for relief but am not able to give my hon. friend full comparative details with other cities. When funds are placed by Parliament at the disposal of the Government the circumtances prevalent in Glasgow will be fully considered.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): Did the circulars of the Local Government Board give the distress committees to understand that funds would be forthcoming throughout the summer?

Mr. SINCLAIR: No; they were simply a notification of how the Act should be administered, and nothing more could be deduced from them.

Mr. BARNES: When will more money be available?

Mr. SINCLAIR: There is a Question on the Paper as to that.

Mr. CLELAND: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, up to the present, the City of Glasgow has raised and contributed locally a larger sum towards the operations of the local distress committee than it has received in the shape of grants from the Local Government Board; whether other places in Scotland have received proportionately much larger grants; and what are the reasons for such disparity in treatment.

MR. SINCLAIR: The facts are not in dispute for the year ending 31st March, 1908. Glasgow Distress Committee received a total of £9,647 in grants, and raised by public subscription £8,000 odd; but that latter fund was not devoted towards meeting the expenses of the distress committee, though it was applied to kindred purposes by a Special Committee.

MR. CLELAND: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that on 20th March the Glasgow distress committee wrote to the Local Government Board stating that the grant requested was an interim demand only, and that a further grant would be required after 31st March to carry on the operations of the committee; whether the Local Government Board informed the distress committee that after 31st March no further grants would be made until August; and, if not, why this course was not adopted.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am aware of the correspondence which has taken place As to the latter part of the Question, I am not aware that the Local Government Board named any date when further grants would be available, but it is well known to all distress committees that the Local Government Board have no funds available for distribution after the close of the financial year on 31st March till a further grant is voted.

MR. CLELAND: Did the Scottish Local Government Board tell the Edinburgh and Glasgow Distress Committee that if they did not apply before 31st March for an additional grant no further grant would be made? Was not that done by the English Local Government Board?

MR. SINCLAIR: I am not sufficiently acquainted with the administration of the English Local Government Board to be able to say.

MR. WATT was understood to ask whether it would not be possible for him to follow the precedent of the English Board and give grants for emigration.

MR. SINCLAIR: If any such request is made I will consider it.

Greenock Strike.

MR. STEWART (Greenock): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction which exists among the trade unionists of Greenock owing to the intervention of the police, in April of last year, when non-union men were imported by the Brewers' Sugar Company, Limited, to take the place of the sugar porters and labourers who were on strike; whether he is aware that on the first day of the dispute labourers were imported from Glasgow, who immediately returned home on the facts being explained to them by the strikers, and that this peaceful persuasion on the part of the strikers formed the subject of complaint, and was brought before the magistrates at a special meeting, which was attended by Mr. Wingate, the secretary of the Brewers' Sugar Company, Limited, and by the chief constable, who suggested that application should be made for additional police protection; whether, on the second day of the dispute, on the Glasgow labourers being again imported they were met at the Greenock railway station by the burgh police, who formed a cordon round them and escorted them to the harbour, and remained with them during the discharge of a cargo, preventing the strikers and their secretary from obtaining any access whatever to the imported men, who, under police escort, were also taken back after work to the railway station; whether such intervention by the police constitutes a violation of the Trade Disputes Act; and whether, having regard to the importance of the case and the precedent it creates, he will issue a general circular to the police authorities of Scotland pointing out that the action of the police in preventing the strikers from having access to blacklegs itself constitutes a provocation to a breach of the peace which it is their duty to maintain.

MR. SINCLAIR: I received a communication on this subject, and on 31st December, 1907, a letter was addressed from the Scottish Office to the Secretary of the Greenock United Trades Council, stating that the Secretary for Scotland is advised that persons, acting on their own behalf or on behalf of a trade union, or of an employer, who attend any place of business where workmen are, for the purposes of Section 2 of the Trades Disputes Act, are not "loiterers," and that the police are not justified in treating them as such or in interfering with their exercise of the rights and purposes of the statute. The letter went on to say that the Secretary for Scotland is further of opinion, as advised, that the interference of the police on such occasions as those mentioned is only justifiable in circumstances where the police have reasonable grounds for apprehending that the intentions of those persons are not peaceful or are likely to lead to public disorder or breach of the peace. In the absence of any such reasonable grounds for apprehending a disturbance the exercise of those rights of persuasion expressly conferred and sanctioned by statute would certainly be construed as "peaceful." I will consider whether a circular is required. As at present advised, I think the publicity which the matter will receive through my hon. friend's Question may be sufficient.

*MR. STEWART: Is there not sufficient material on which to issue a general statement in view of the specific allegation that the police contravened both the letter and the spirit of the Trade Disputes Act which was specially passed to——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is an argumentative Question.

Unemployment in Glasgow.

SIR ANDREW TORRANCE (Glasgow, Central): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will consider the position of Glasgow in its present condition of distress through the thousands who are out of employment; if he is aware that Glasgow citizens have contributed over £12,000 by voluntary subscriptions; that a deputation of Glasgow Members waited recently on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of the Local Government Board, and the Secretary for Scotland, urging that certain sums should be advanced to the Glasgow distress committee to enable them to continue their present work for the unemployed; and that the Lord Provost of Glasgow attended at Edinburgh with a deputation to the Local Government Board (Scotland), and from that Board received a promise that help would be forthcoming, but that up to now no communication has been received to that effect.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am requested by the Prime Minister to reply to this Question. I am fully aware of the condition as to unemployment which has prevailed in Glasgow. Any assurance of help that has been given has been conditional upon money being made available by Parliament during the current financial year. The Supplementary Estimates recently laid before the House contain a Vote for this purpose.

Surcharge of Limerick Guardians.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that five Poor Law guardians in the Newcastle West Union, in the County of Limerick, were surcharged by the auditor £21, being for ten weeks at £2 2s. a week, which he considered they overpaid Dr. Ambrose, who was appointed to do duty for the medical officer of the workhouse and dispensary there at £7 7s. per week; whether he is also aware that at first Dr. Condon and Dr. Ambrose were appointed for workhouse and dispensary at £4 4s. a week each, and that Dr. Condon having got ill Dr. Ambrose was requested to do the duty of both at £7 7s. a week; and whether, having regard to the fact that the guardians actually saved £1 1s. a week by Dr. Ambrose doing the combined duties to the satisfaction of the guardians and poor of the district, he will, as President of the Local Government Board, cancel this surcharge.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. It is not the case that there was a proposal to appoint Dr. Condon and Dr. Ambrose as temporary medical officers for the workhouse and dispensary respectively, at £4 4s. a week each. Dr. Condon himself was on sick leave when the temporary appointment was made. When the guardians proposed to appoint Dr. Ambrose at £7 7s. a week, the Local Government Board twice pointed out that the usual rate was £5 5s. a week, and warned the guardians that they would be personally liable if they paid a higher rate. Notwithstanding these warnings, the guardians paid the temporary officer at the rate of £7 7s. a week, and the auditor consequently surcharged the excess amount. The surcharge was upheld on appeal, and there is no power to re-open the matter.

Newcastle West Union Audit.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the auditor at the last audit of the accounts of the Newcastle West union appointed eight o'clock in the morning for his audit and was finished by mid-day; and whether he will issue instructions to the auditor to fix an hour more convenient to district councillors having to come a long distance.

MR. BIRRELL: The auditor appointed eight o'clock in the morning for opening the audit, that being the hour at which he arrived by train from Tralee. The next train does not arrive till two o'clock in the afternoon. The auditor did not leave till 3.30 p.m. on the same day, so that any persons who desired to attend had ample opportunity of appearing before him. The auditor has a good deal of preliminary routine work to do before he is in a position to receive and consider objections. The guardians have raised no objection to the commencement of the audit at such an early hour, but if they should do so the auditor would doubtless meet their convenience.

Ireland and the Tuberculosis Bill.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in view of the differences of opinion existing in Ireland on the subject of the methods proposed by the Government to deal with tuberculosis, and in view of the fact that public opinion has not had time to express itself on this complicated and important subject, he will postpone the Committee stage of the Tuberculosis Bill until the autumn session.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) asked whether in view of the fact that there was a general desire that certain portions of the Bill should be adequately discussed, the right hon. Gentleman would consider the advisability of referring the Bill to a Grand Committee.

MR. BIRRELL: While I cannot agree that there is any serious difference of opinion in Ireland upon the subject of the Tuberculosis Prevention Bill, I feel that sufficient consideration could scarcely be given to it in Committee at the late hour which would be inevitable, having regard to the present state of business. I propose, therefore, to move for the discharge of the existing order for the Committee stage, and to reserve the Bill for consideration by a Grand Committee during the autumn sitting, when I have no doubt this very important and necessary measure will be carefully and yet speedily dealt with.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the attitude taken by the Irish landlords towards the restoration of the evicted tenants, he would refuse to give further facilities for the disposal of estates at high prices without the immediate reinstatement of the Plan of Campaign evicted tenants, which formed part of the unfulfilled agreement of 1903.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners could not legally refuse to give facilities for the sale of estates upon the grounds suggested in the Question. Moreover, in the case of all the Plan of Campaign estates except the Clanricarde estate a settlement has been made, or is in process of being made, as regards the reinstatement of evicted tenants.

Aerial Navigation and National Defence.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if questions of aerial navigation have received consideration by the Committee of National Defence; whether naval officers have been called into consultation; and if it is intended to entrust all experiments and construction to the military authorities.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): This is a matter which presents both naval and military aspects, and it is not desirable to say more at present than that it is engaging the attention both of the naval and military authorities who have been, and are, in consultation with one another on the subject.

MR. ASHLEY: Is it the intention of the Government still further to reduce the sum of money granted to this important branch?

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir.

Scottish Judges and Company Directorships.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the fact that Judges of the Court of Session and Sheriffs in Scotland frequently act as ordinary directors of trading companies there and receive remuneration for so acting; whether he is aware that a company called the Arizona Copper Company has a Judge on its ordinary board; that this company has several times been in litigation in the Courts; and whether, in future appointments of Judges and Sheriffs, he will make it a condition that they shall not accept such posts in trading concerns.

MR. ASQUITH: I have no reason to suppose that the practice referred to by my hon. friend is of frequent occurrence, but I understand that the statement in reference to the Arizona Company is correct. I have already stated my view that participation by a member of the bench in the direction of trading concerns is highly undesirable.

MR. WATT: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of my Question as to future appointments? Which is the most important—that a Judge or a Cabinet Minister should not be a company director?

MR. ASQUITH: I think it more important the Judge should not.

Colonial Office Vote.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he can state on what day it is intended to take the Colonial Office Vote.

MR. ASQUITH: The Colonial Office Vote will be put down for next Tuesday, the 28th.

The All-Red Route.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can now state the Government's decision with regard to the All-red Route; and whether the principle of subsidising such a scheme has been definitely accepted.

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot add anything to the Answer I gave in reply to a similar Question by the hon. Member for Mid Armagh on 9th July.

EARL WINTERTON asked, having regard to the fact that the question was raised a year ago, whether a statement would be made before Parliament rises.

MR. ASQUITH: I am dependent in this matter on the Committee. I can assure the noble Earl due expedition is being made in the proceedings.

MR. HAROLD COX asked the right hon. Gentleman to bear in mind the declaration of the late Prime Minister against subsidies.

MR. ASQUITH: Yes.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): May we take it that nothing definite will be done till the House has had an opportunity of discussing it?

MR. ASQUITH: I must ask for notice of that Question.

Report of the Hop Committee.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the urgent necessity of the case, he will undertake that an early opportunity be given to the House to discuss the Report of the Select Committee on Hops.

MR. ASQUITH: I am afraid that the time at the disposal of the House will not admit of a discussion upon this Report before the adjournment.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: In view of the urgency of the matter, will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to bring in legislation on the subject during the autumn session?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot give any such undertaking, but I will undertake to consider the Report very carefully during the holidays.

MR. CHAPLIN: Will no opportunity of any kind be given the House to discuss this very important subject?

MR. ASQUITH: I do not know whether it would be in order on the Appropriation Bill or on the Motion for adjournment.

*SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of adopting some or all of the practical recommendations contained in the Report?

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, when time allows.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: I shall be obliged to raise this question on the first opportunity.

Irish Supply.

MR. JOHN REDMOND asked the Prime Minister, in view of the fact that no provision had been made for a third day for the discussion of the Irish Estimates, whether he was aware that ever since the Supply rule was established, a minimum of three days had been given, and in more than one year under the late Government four days.

MR. ASQUITH replied that if they took the whole of the days in which debates connected with Ireland had been taken, this session showed an advantage in favour of Ireland. Although there had been only two days allotted to the Irish Estimates, there had really been four and a half days given to Irish Supply, including the discussions on the Supplementary Estimates and the day occupied in getting the Speaker out of the chair. If Thursday next were not to be devoted to the Report stage of the Irish Universities Bill, he would have been able to give that day also. He would add that during the session the Government had introduced no fewer than ten Bills in which Ireland was concerned.

MR. JOHN REDMOND said his only anxiety was that no precedent should be set up for limiting the discussion of the Irish Estimates to two days, and he would be satisfied if the right hon. Gentleman would give him an assurance that that would not be so.

MR. ASQUITH: I have no hesitation in giving the hon. Gentleman that assurance.

A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield): I wish, Mr. Speaker, to draw your attention to a speech delivered by the hon. Member for Jarrow on the 20th inst., and to ask whether that speech does not constitute a breach of the privileges of this House, being a direct reflection upon other hon. Members. The words I wish to take exception to, and which more especially constitute a grave libel on hon. Members sitting round the hon. Member, are—

> "Mr. Pete Curran, Labour M.P. for Jarrow, declared at Tottenham that being in the House of Commons did not tend towards a man's moral and intellectual improvement—[laughter and

cries of 'Agreed']—and he questioned whether he was equal intellectually to what he was years ago. [Laughter.] He was doubtful whether he had ever before been in such bad company as that with which he had been compelled to be associated in his experience as a Member of Parliament. [Laughter.]"

Arising out of the decisions of Sir Erskine May, I wish to ask whether that is not libel on the Members of the House, and more especially on the hon. Members amongst whom the Member for Jarrow sits.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member asks me my opinion on the speech I shall give him no answer. If he asks me whether in my opinion it constitutes a breach of privilege in any way, I say not. Every hon. Member is entitled to form his own opinion of the company amongst which he sits.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Walter Francis Roch, esquire, for the County of Pembroke.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS (MASTERS) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 335.]

TRUSTS BILL.

First Special Report from the Select Committee brought up, and read. [Inquiry not completed.]

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 245.]

LICENSING BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee).

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair].

On Clause 1—

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) moved an Amendment providing that the reduction of licensed houses should apply only to "any municipal borough or urban district having a population, according to the last Census, for the time being of over 10,000." He said the object of this Amendment was to secure that the reduction of licences should not apply to rural districts and those small urban districts usually associated with rural or agricultural parts of the country. No case had yet been made out, either on the Second Reading or in speeches in the House or outside it, for any wholesale reduction of licences in rural districts. So far as the Bill aimed at carrying out temperance reform by a reduction of licences, the arguments had been based on experience in large centres of population, great towns, and urban centres. They had heard such phrases as "low-class public-houses in slum areas," but it was impossible to find anything of that kind in the rural areas which the Amendment proposed to except. Public-houses in rural districts were very different from those in urban centres. The people who used them were generally of most humble circumstances; they receive as low a rate of wages as any class of persons employed in the country. The licensed house was their only meeting place after the day's work. They usually lived in small houses, which did not contain accommodation for many persons to meet in a social circle. The local inn was the committee-room for all their meetings. Friendly societies held their lodges there, and the houses were the sole meeting places of those organisations which played so large a part in village life. Any wholesale reduction of licences in rural districts opened out a problem entirely different from that of reduction in great centres, and it would probably mean a great hardship to those who had few pleasures in life, and who used the public-house rationally. The Amendment might perhaps be opposed on the ground that there was excessive drinking in rural districts. He would not trouble the Committee with figures on that point, but the licensing statistics showed that in those counties which were chiefly rural there was no argument for the wholesale reduction of licences on the ground of excessive drunkenness. Then there was another class of consideration which he wished to advance, and that was the question of the wayside inn, which was a resting-place for the passing traveller. When the traffic on main roads was being opened up by cyclists, motor-cars, and touring vans, these inns became important. This class of inn was not to be dealt with by any scale of population. Its customers were wayfarers simply passing to and fro. There were many inns of that class; they were constantly under public supervision, and every passer-by could see what went on in them. Finally he would like to remind hon. Members opposite that the tied-house system which they so frequently condemned would be more difficult to get rid of or to modify if they reduced competition by greatly limiting the number of houses.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, after the word 'shall,' to insert the words 'in any municipal borough or urban district having a population according to the last Census for the time being of over ten thousand.'"—(*Mr. Gretton.*)

Question put, "That these words be there inserted."

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): The hon. Member has approached the question from the standpoint that if there is to be any compulsory reduction in the number of public-houses the more it is circumscribed the better. But I do not think he can seriously expect us to exclude from the operation of this Bill more than one-half of the licensing districts in the country. We hold that a gross excess in the number of licensed premises is no better a thing in the village than it is in the town. I would point out further that right hon. Gentlemen opposite, when they were proposing a reduction of licensed houses in 1904, made no distinction whatever between the case of rural districts and the case of towns, and as a matter of fact Quarter Sessions have put that Act into operation as readily in the rural districts as they have in the towns.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): In what proportion?

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I cannot give the statistics offhand, but everyone acquainted with the working of that Act knows that Quarter Sessions, so far as the limited powers conferred by the Act and the limited sum placed at their disposal have allowed them, have been active in weeding out redundant houses as much in the villages as in the towns. The Bill does not propose, as one would have supposed from the speech of the hon. Member opposite, to sweep away the whole of the public-houses in all the rural districts, but the scale has been most carefully framed so as to allow for the case of the more scattered populations in rural districts. So far as the outlying houses are concerned, we have already provided in the Bill specifically for those cases. Last night the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham pointed out the extreme inconvenience which would be caused if outlying houses, situated on a high road far away from a village, were swept out of existence merely by the operation of the scale, but if those who have directed criticisms to the terms of the Bill had only given to it the careful study which we on our side have been obliged to give to it, they would have found time and again that their criticisms had been forestalled by the provisions of the Bill, and that they were in consequence wholly out of place. If the hon. Member has such faith in the discretion of the licensing justices, he cannot doubt for a moment that they would in such a case be prepared to make modifications in the scale, nor is there any doubt but that the Commission would permit such a modification. I will give one illustration, which shows not only the necessity of extending this part of the Bill to the rural districts, but also the need of making the reductions compulsory and not leaving the matter to the discretion of Quarter Sessions. I take the county of Huntingdonshire, which stands at the head of the counties which has the largest number of public-houses. It has one licensed house for every 105 of the population, or if you take the adult males, one public-house for about every twenty-five men. It also stands not low in the table of convictions for drunkenness. Under the Act of 1904 the Court of Quarter Sessions have only suppressed eight houses out of a total of 513, and they have recently intimated to the Home Office that they thought it unnecessary to make next year any levy for compensation purposes or to make any further reductions. Lastly, I would draw attention to one further consideration. If this proposal were accepted the effect would be that the rural districts would still be called upon to pay a compensation levy, while they would either not benefit at all or in a less degree from the compensation fund. The contributions would be paid by the rural districts and the towns would receive them.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) thought that the Under-Secretary had fallen into the same mistake as others, when he stated that the only reason adduced for the acceptance of this Amendment was that Members of the Opposition thought that reduction of licences was undesirable. He fell into the error of supposing that the reductions under this Bill and under the Act of 1904, when the matter was in the discretion of the justices, which discretion was now sought to be taken away, was the same. It was quite a different thing to say that no reductions were desirable and that reductions under this Bill were undesirable. If the Government maintained the principle that reductions to a fixed scale were necessary in the rural districts, it was for them to say that the scale of reductions under this Bill was the best scale. The Government must have at the back of their mind some reason for saying why the fixed scale in the schedule of the Bill was a proper scale for the rural districts. Was it based upon the theory, which could be disputed from the licensing statistics, that the number of convictions for drunkenness had any direct relationship with the number of licences? Because, if so he would like to take the statistics of four groups into which the counties given in the licensing statistics could be divided. There were those that had under thirty houses to 10,000 of the population; those that had between thirty and forty; those that had between forty and fifty; and those that had over fifty. The suggestion that a comparison between two districts was not fair because the convictions for drunkenness might be due to the activity or otherwise of the police did not apply when four districts were compared, because in that case the activity or inactivity of the police was averaged between the four. In the first group, where there were under thirty houses per 10,000 of the population, the convictions for drunkenness were fifty-seven. In the group which had between thirty and forty houses, the convictions were thirty-six; between forty and fifty houses, the convictions were fifty; and in that which had over fifty houses, the convictions averaged 33·22. That went directly against the contention which must be at the root of this scheme, that a fixed scale could be laid down suitable to all districts irrespective of local conditions and needs. It was true to say that a superfluity of licensed houses in towns might do more harm than in the rural districts. In towns a public-house at every street corner might attract those who passed them, but in the rural districts, each public-house had its own *clientele*, and the man who went into one was not likely to frequent another to which he was unaccustomed to go. In the country also the habitual drunkard was known, and there was the double safeguard that the publican could refuse to serve anybody he knew to be an habitual drunkard. These were reasons why in the rural districts it was not necessary to reduce licences to a fixed scale, as it was held to be elsewhere. The Under-Secretary had given the House to understand that he knew what the effect of the scale would be in every parish of the country, that it had been carefully framed with regard to all local requirements. Then why were not the figures upon which it was obtained given to the House? That was most important. It was said last night that the public-houses in the villages could not be reduced to one because of the words in the schedule.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Need not be reduced.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY did not think that anybody ever alleged that public-houses were to be reduced to one in every parish. He contended that, for all that appeared in the schedule, if a licensing bench was composed of Radical teetotallers who had no desire to drink themselves and wished to prevent others doing so, public-houses could be reduced to one in any parish. But parishes and villages were different things. He knew of parishes in the north of England which contained villages five or six miles apart, and, if the Bill passed in its present form, and the rural districts were not excluded from its operation, there was nothing to prevent a village being without a public-house at all, and the people having to walk long distances to obtain that harmless social enjoyment to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley referred last night. He hoped the Government would accept the Amendment.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) pointed out that the Under-Secretary had taken the county of Huntingdonshire as an illustration of the necessity of this Bill because the justices there had done nothing under the Act of 1904 to reduce the number of licences. He happened to live in what appeared to be the most sober county in England, Oxfordshire, and curiously enough, the number of licensed houses in Oxfordshire per 10,000 of the population were three times as many as in the county which had the greatest number of convictions for drunkenness. The Act of 1904 was constantly quoted in comparison with this Bill. That Act did reduce a large number of licences; but it was impossible for any Member of this House to prove that the reduction of licences under that Act had had any effect in checking intemperance. The Act of 1904, in so far as it prevented drinking by the reduction of the licences, had been just as ineffective as all Bills of this kind had ever been. The noble Lord had alluded to the injustice that was likely to arise in the case of a parish with a sparsely distributed population. He lived at one end of a parish four miles long, and the bulk of the population lived in two small hamlets at the other end, each of which contained a public-house. It seemed to him that if the population of that parish necessitated a reduction of public-houses there would naturally be a demand on the part of the bulk of the inhabitants of the parish to retain their proportion of licensed houses, and to sacrifice the small hamlets four miles away at the other end of the parish. That was one of a large number of injustices or inconveniences which would be inflicted on all those people in the country districts.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I should not have taken part in the debate if it had not been for the speech of the Under-Secretary, which was full of statements which I do not think he or his Department can justify. When he was challenged by one of my hon. friends behind me as to the figures on which his statement ought to have been based—I do not think it was so based—he was obliged to confess that he had no information which enabled him to make a positive statement on the subject. That is one of the difficulties with which we have been face to face, not only on this Bill, but on other Bills this session. The Government for the second or third time have brought forward legislation which ought to be justified by figures and Returns available in all quarters of the House. This Bill is assumed to be a wide-reaching Amendment of the Act of 1904, and during the debates many statements have been made in regard to the working of that Act—none more remarkable, I believe, none more unjustifiable, than that which has been made by the Under-Secretary. He has suggested that the Act of 1904, so far as it went, and he said it in a tone of cynical criticism, had done as much in the country as in the towns. I believe that statement is absolutely incorrect. I believe that the Under-Secretary will find if he prepares the necessary figures and Returns, that the operations of Quarter Sessions have been almost entirely in the towns and not in the rural counties; and in the vast majority of what are called rural villages, the number of public-houses is already so small that the operation of the Bill would be practically useless. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley shakes his head. I know he is a deservedly recognised authority on the subject of temperance and temperance legislation, but let me beg him to remember this, that other people live in and have knowledge of country villages, and I venture to say without fear of contradiction that, except in those villages where there are special characteristics, either in mining districts or where they are in the immediate neighbourhood of towns, the number of public-houses in our rural villages, in the vast majority of cases—in ninety-five out of 100 I believe—is regulated by consumption and demand, and the excess number is very limited. That after all is a matter of opinion. If the Member for Spen Valley and the Member for Westmoreland believe that statement to be incorrect, why do they not give the Government the information which they possess, and which would enable the Government to prepare a Return. That would be a complete answer.? No such Return has been presented, and we are acting entirely upon guesswork. I frankly admit that my statement is based on my own experience. I know something of the South and West of England as the right hon. Member for Spen Valley and the hon. Member for Westmoreland know something of the North of England. We all of us travel about the country, and are enabled to form our own views. For myself, I believe that in the vast majority of country villages the Act of 1904 has not been required. A much more important statement was made by the Under Secretary, namely, that the Act of 1904 was somewhat limited in consequence of its powers and the amount of money available. What are the facts? If this Bill passes in its present form without any Amendment, what will be the difference? Under this Bill the necessary reduction of licences is to be made in fourteen years, and under the Act of 1904 the same reduction would be made in twenty-one years. Here again the Home Office, jointly on this occasion, shake their respective heads. Why, instead of shaking their heads or making affirmations, do they not give us the Returns? Calculations have been made by experts and recognised authorities, and the only way in which those calculations can be proved to be incorrect is by a statement produced by the Home Office giving figures which should be available to all Members and to the country at large. No such Return has been produced, and in the absence of any information we are justified in standing by the opinion which has been arrived at by competent experts who have followed the operation of the Act of 1904, and I hope the Government will challenge my statement if they can, though I believe they cannot, when I say that the Act of 1904 would effect the same reduction of licences in twenty-one years that this Bill is to effect in fourteen years. Indeed, I am not sure that I am not rather exaggerating the period which would be necessary under the Act of 1904, because, as a matter of fact, in the first year of that Act the operation was limited owing to the doubt on the part of Quarter Sessions and the local authorities as to the means at their disposal; but the operation was quickened in the second year and quickened still more in the third year which has just past. There is every reason to believe as time went on the operation of the Act in each year would have been increased in force and rapidity. If that is the case, even less than twenty-one years would have been occupied; but I will make the Government a present of two or three years, and will suppose that it took twenty-four years to bring about the reduction that it is said will be effected by this Bill in fourteen years. But that would be no justification for the allegation made by the Government against the Act of 1904 or against Quarter Sessions. So far as the Amendment is concerned, I believe that as a matter of justice and a matter of practice the carrying of it would not interfere in any way with the object the Government allege they have at heart, namely, the promotion of temperance and the reduction of temptation. At the same time, I am bound to say that in the interests of the rural districts themselves I should regret very much to see a distinction of this kind drawn between them in an Act of Parliament. I hope that my hon. friend who moved this Amendment, which has given rise to an extremely interesting debate, will not press it to a division, because if he does I for one could not support it. I think the distinction which he draws is an invidious one, although my hon. friend is perfectly justified in saying that in ninety nine cases out of 100 the operation of the Bill would be in the urban districts. The Government in making allegations against the action of Quarter Sessions, not as to their good faith or their honour, but in regard to the effect given to the Act of 1904, have not armed themselves with the information which they alone possess, and which alone would enable them to refute the statements which we have made, and which we believe to be just and accurate. It is information which ought to be given to the House, when, in the first place, the Government challenge the efficacy of an Act of Parliament, and, in the second place, allege that Quarter Sessions have failed to do the work they ought to have done.

*MR. TALBOT (Oxford University) said he wished to say a few words in agreement with what his right hon. friend had expressed. It was to be regretted that when an Act of Parliament was so much criticised as the Act of 1904 had been during this discussion, they had not been able to obtain that information which, as the right hon. Gentleman had observed, the Government alone possessed. He did not wish to enlarge on his own personal experience, but knowing the difficulties which arose, and what was material to the consideration of this question, he desired to point out that his experience had not been small. He could conscientiously say that the Act of 1904 had been administered in the county in which he lived in a manner which had been attended by a very considerable reduction of licences, and that had been effected without any great friction amongst those who were affected. If that were so in Kent, why should it not be so in the rest of England; and if it were so in the rest of England, why should they not know of it? He could not understand the reason of the reticence of the Government in this matter; they all had the same object in view, namely, the encouragement of the real cause of temperance in the country. And he hoped that they all had at heart not to promote the cause of temperance at the risk of injustice to individuals. That had always been the line he had tried to follow in these matters, but he could not see very much of the latter principle in the proposals of the Government. The reduction of licences which had gone on so far had combined those two cardinal principles, and why should they not know what the working of the law had been? The Government must know it, and if they knew it why did they not tell the House? Personally, he could not support the Amendment, because he had himself gone on the principle of acting equally between town and country, and in the division of Kent where he lived they had reduced the number of redundant licences considerably in the rural districts. The crying need for reduction no doubt was in the congested urban districts. In his own division, in the town of Chatham, there had been a notorious redundancy of licences. Therefore he had exercised his influence to enforce a reduction in that place. But though he agreed that urban districts had the strongest claim, he did not think that they had the sole claim, and therefore he would not willingly limit the operation of this clause to urban districts.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said he would like to say a word or two [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh."]. Hon. Members opposite were not allowed to speak themselves, but their director had no power to prevent Members of the Opposition from speaking. He thought this Amendment was most useful to get some information from the Government if it possesses it, or from any hon. Member opposite, as to the basis on which these calculations were made. It was difficult to get, and his view was that they had not got it, and never had it, and that their calculations as far as rural districts were concerned were made by rule of thumb. The difficulty was that in the census reports all the areas were given in statute acres. He had gone through every county in England to reduce statute acres into square miles, for another purpose, separating rural from urban districts, and the result was astonishing. There were forty-two counties the population in the rural districts of which were less than 200 per square mile, twelve counties with a population of less than

100 to the square mile, and three with less than fifty. The last case was comparable to a desert, but even in a desert people could become thirsty and they had to be fairly provided for. Take a large parish like Dartmoor, for instance, which had tens of thousands of acres. Under the Bill it would be entitled to two or three public-houses, and yet there were houses and hamlets scattered all over the area. Even if the public-house should be exactly in the middle, a poor labourer would have to walk above a mile there and a mile back to get his glass of beer, but if it should happen to be at the edge of the moor he would have to walk two miles or more each way. He wanted to point out this anomaly because it could be so easily altered. The figures were so astonishing that he could scarcely believe them, but he had submitted them to an expert who found them to be practically correct. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin spoke of the Act of 1904, his statements were disputed, but in the three years ending January, 1908, there were 3,778 licences suppressed, or 1,259 per annum, and they were suppressed with judiciousness, the magistrates selecting undesirable public-houses, and as far as Birmingham was concerned it had acted admirably. They had suppressed, and were in the process of suppressing, when the Bill appeared and everything was stopped, all the public-houses which were supposed to be redundant or objectionable, and the compensation which came exclusively from the trade was given fairly. The suppression under the Act was increasing, for in 1907 there were not 1,257 but 1,716 suppressed. But supposing it went on at the smaller rate, in fourteen years there would be hard upon 18,000 licences suppressed. The Prime Minister said that that was wholly inadequate, and he proposed in fourteen years to suppress 30,000.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Gentleman is now discussing the total number of licences which are to be suppressed. This Amendment only raises the question whether the rural districts shall be left out of the Bill or not.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS said he had said what he wanted to say on that subject. He only dwelt on it because his right hon. friend had spoken about it and his statements were understood to be disputed, and therefore he wished to quote the official figures to confirm what he had said.

MR. GRETTON asked leave to withdraw the Amendment. It had served a most useful purpose and had certainly made it clear that the Government had no basis on which they could justify the inclusion of rural districts. They had been requested to produce their reasons, but had not been able to do so.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) moved to amend the clause so as to direct the licensing justices to "adjust" instead of "reduce" the number of on-licences in their district. He said that the object of his Amendment was to confirm and give Parliamentary regulations to a very useful and common practice which prevailed amongst licensing authorities at present, namely, that a number of licences should be surrendered in one district as a condition of the grant of new licences. That procedure had conduced to temperance and had also the advantage of equalising the supply of the wants of the public. It the further advantage that a very large reduction of licences was possible without drawing upon the compensation fund. This was a practice that undoubtedly ought to be encouraged and extended. He quite admitted that the acceptance of the Amendment would involve certain further changes, and when they came to the schedule they would have to examine it with some care, because he did not wish that the effect of the Amendment should be in every case to force the justices to increase the licences up to the exact limit; therefore, they would have to have some more flexible limits, something akin to the zones in the Irish Land Act, within which a reduction or extension would be possible. All he wanted to ask in the acceptance of the Amendment was that the licensing authorities should survey the conditions of their districts as a whole, and see whether some new licence was fairly wanted in the interests of the community, and whether, without having recourse to the drastic provisions and limited compensation provided under the Bill as it stood, they could not at once meet the legitimate wants of the public and at the same time secure a large reduction of houses by private arrangement. Personally, he would like to see conditions applied to new licences which would give them a new character different from the ordinary type of public-house, and assimilate them to cheap popular restaurants they saw on the Continent, into which a man would find no difficulty in taking his family.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, to leave out the word 'reduce' and to insert the word 'adjust.'"—(*Mr. James Hope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'reduce' stand part of the clause."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): We cannot accept this Amendment. I have listened to the hon. Gentleman very carefully, and I understand he moves it with the intention in some other part of the Bill of introducing other Amendments to fulfil some desire which he has in his mind. But looking at the actual words, if the Amendment was accepted the only obligation on the justices, as far as I can see, would be to adjust the number of licences between different parts of the district. As to whether the word "adjust" includes or excludes "reduce" I do not quite know, and the hon. Member has not explained. We are perfectly content, with the Bill as it stands, to reduce the licences to a certain proportion, and we cannot, therefore, accept the Amendment.

MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton) said he was not sure that the right hon. Gentleman had completely grasped what his hon. friend's object was, though it was not very difficult to understand. What his hon. friend contemplated was that while the scheme of the Government might be applied in the case of the wards of a town, for instance, in which the number of licences was in excess of the number which the Government thought was the right number, their scheme possessed no flexbility at all so as to admit of its mitigation in wards in which the number of licences was less than the very limited number which the Government laid down. This was a serious question, which deserved more careful attention than the Government had yet attempted to give it. Let him give one or two illustrations of how this worked at present. In Birmingham, for instance, the existing number of licensed premises was 1,365. The maximum allowed under the Bill was 745. The excess of licences, taking the wards in which there were excessive licences over the statutory allowance, was 736. This proposal was clearly one of substance. In Liverpool, at the present time, there were 1,844 on-licences, and the maximum allowance was 962. The excess of licences in certain wards amounted to 1,116 but there were in some wards 134 licences below the statutory scale. The result would be that in those districts in which licences fell below the scale the inhabitants would be denied even the number of licences fixed by the Government as the standard adequate for their necessities. The Committee was entitled to some explanation why those particular districts should not be allowed their full number of houses. To his mind, the real explanation was that the Government had not given the slightest attention to any figures upon which their case rested. He would listen with extreme interest to any explanation of the principle upon which this proposal was made.

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. and learned Member knows very well that the Government have given great consideration to this matter, and have only put forward their proposals after carefully considering the hardships that may be inflicted. Is not this a matter more properly arising on the question of the definition of areas? I am not sure whether the word "adjust" necessarily includes "reduce," and as it is undesirable to make the alteration suggested by the Amendment I suggest that the discussion should be deferred until we come to the question of areas.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): The suggestion of the Prime Minister fails for this reason, that I do not know whether the Committee will have any opportunity of discussing areas. There are some big questions to be discussed on this clause before that point can be reached. I will not enter into a contest with the right hon. Gentleman as to what interpretation will be placed upon the word "adjust" by a Court of law, but it is quite clear that the word when ordinarily used by ordinary men means the power to move in either of two directions, up or down.

Mr. ASQUITH: But not to alter the aggregate number.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The great boroughs of England are governed by a licensing authority, which is a committee of magistrates of the whole borough. They have to deal with the whole borough, but are only allowed to deal with it as divided into wards. They are indeed a central licensing authority for the whole borough, but are bound to treat it as divided into wards. In Birmingham, Liverpool, and Leeds the total number of licences may or may not be in excess of the number contemplated by the Government. I believe that in Leeds the number of public-houses is less than the statutory allowance, but the licensing authority of Leeds is not allowed to consider the borough as a whole, but only as divided up into wards. Therefore in those wards where the number is in excess of the allowance, they will be compelled by law to reduce the number of public-houses, but in those wards where there is a deficit they will not be allowed to increase the number.

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley): Yes they will because they can grant new licences.

Mr. ASQUITH: In a case where the number of licences falls short of the statutory allowance the licensing justices under Clause 4 have power to grant new licences, subject to the operation of Clause 2, which gives power by resolution to prohibit the granting of new licences. The licensing justices will have all the powers of the present justices in regard to the granting of new licences.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I ask that the licensing authority having control over a large borough area should treat it as a whole, and not in fragmentary fashion. That power cannot be given unless "adjust" is substituted for "reduce." If that is done the licensing authority for Leeds will be able to take the whole borough, and if they think it desirable they can, in conformity with the principles of the Government, reduce the number of licences to the exact proportion of the population. That may involve a slight transfer of licences from one district to another. That transfer is not allowed under the Bill, but it can be effected by means of the Amendment. The proposal ought to commend itself to the common-sense of the Committee, and in my view this is the proper place to deal with it.

Mr. ASQUITH: The argument appears to me to be one for taking the larger instead of smaller areas. If we take Leeds, Birmingham, or Liverpool as a whole, and consider the problem of reduction with regard to the needs and conditions of the whole place, that is purely a question of area, and, therefore, ought to come up for decision when the word "area" is dealt with. We cannot deal with the matter apart from the question of area, nor can we grant more licences in the way of compensation unless the locality want them. It will be an impossible process to attempt to level up a ward by granting licences that are not wanted; nor can we grant new licences in a ward where the justices will not grant new licences at all. The word "adjust" will not carry out the object which the hon. Member has in view. All that leads to the conclusion that the proper place for a discussion as to whether the area should be a large area or a small area will be when we deal with the Amendments relating to the proposal in the Bill with respect to area.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman appreciates the point. There are two observations I wish to make. His last argument amounts to this. If in a ward, say of Leeds, there are fewer public-houses in proportion to the population than are contemplated by this scheme, you could not increase the number because they are not wanted. They may not be wanted in that locality, but they may be wanted in 1909 or 1910, and there would be no power for the justices to deal with areas which had been enlarged.

MR. ASQUITH: In 1910 an application would be made for a new licence for that particular ward in respect of the number of licences being below the statutory limit, and the justices would be entitled to grant it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If there is to be a change it had better be done by the method proposed by the Amendment than by the method suggested by the right hon. Gentleman. There is another point which I think has escaped the notice of the right hon. Gentleman. I may be wrong, but I think I am not. He says that we should defer the discussion on this matter until we get to the question of area. I am afraid that the question of area has already been determined as regards the county by the division we had yesterday. The first line of the Bill says: "Licensing Justices shall..." And the justices were decided to be not Quarter Sessions but the justices of the licensing district. Are we to be at liberty at a later stage of the Bill, having decided that the licensing area is to be the area of the licensing district, to extend the area and say that the county is to be the area, carrying with that the necessary consequence that Quarter Sessions are to be the licensing authority? I confess I thought that was decided, and if it has been decided the only question that remains for us is: Are we in the exceptional cases in which the licensing authority does cover the whole county, as in the great county boroughs, there and there alone, to have it still open to us to decide on what principle the licensing authority is to act, and whether they are to have the whole area to deal with, and the whole of the licences within that area? We contend that the licensing authority should be able to deal with the whole of the licences as one entity—one unit—and to decide what is best for them. Although there is but one authority in Leeds, Liverpool, and Birmingham, they are not to take the districts as a whole in dealing with licences, but they are to take them ward by ward and consider how far the licences correspond with the principle laid down by the right hon. Gentleman. I do not know whether we shall be at liberty, when the question of area comes up, to extend the area in a county district so that the authority for dealing with it shall be the one having authority over the county.

MR. ASQUITH: On the point of order, while undoubtedly we have decided that the licensing justices shall be the authority to perform the duty of reduction as imposed, anything that comes within the district of those licensing justices—anything which defines not in the sense of extension, but in the sense of limitation of the district of the licensing justices—would be in order, and therefore in all the cases put it would be perfectly competent and consistent with the decision at which the Committee has already arrived to give jurisdiction over the whole of the bounds.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Not in the counties.

MR. ASQUITH: Well, not in the counties. Nobody has put the counties as a serious case. I mean as regards the county boroughs. I submit it is perfectly clear that the question is still open.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly if any Amendment were proposed to introduce an area which would involve Quarter Sessions settling the point instead of the licensing justices, I do not think we could discuss it. I think that point is settled. As regards what the Prime Minister has said, undoubtedly the question is still open as to whether the area should be the area proposed by the Bill or anything between that and the whole district for which the licensing justices are appointed. Therefore as regards the county boroughs the clause can still be amended to include the whole of the county borough instead of each ward of the county borough.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton) said the mover of the Amendment had stated his intention very clearly. He had stated that he wished to give the licensing authority power to transfer certain licences to new districts which were growing. He (Mr. Seddon) totally objected to that proposal. What had been the experience under the Act of 1904? In many of the towns new districts were springing up. The working classes had gone to more respectable quarters, and in many parts of the country they had spent a lot of money in resisting the attempts of certain brewers to get licences in those places. The brewers had a number of licences where they were of no value and where they could not get tenants to remain in the houses, the population having left the districts. These brewers had gone like philanthropists to the licensing bench and said: "If you are prepared to give us new licences in certain districts we will give up licences in districts where they are really of no value to us." He would remind the hon. Member for the Walton division of Liverpool that there were two districts there where, he was happy to think, the owner of the land had used a right which ought to be in the hands of the people of the country. He sold a certain portion of land known as Parliament Field and Kensington Field, and it was in the lease that no public-house should be placed upon the estate. Was it the wish of the mover of the Amendment that licenses should be given up in localities where they had practically ceased to be profitable to the holders, and that those holders should be allowed to place public-houses in districts where they were not required and where they were not wanted by the inhabitants? Was the brewer to have the chance of making a bargain with the licensing bench in that manner and of planting public-houses in districts where they would be inimical to the best interests of the working classes? He understood the Prime Minister to say that the justices would operate in regard to wards and not over the whole district. He took it that in those wards if there was a redundancy of licences the justices would be able to use the powers conferred by this Bill to bring them down to the requirements of the wards. He was glad to say that there were working class districts where the number of public-houses was less than the number which might be allowed under the Bill, but they were sufficient for the requirements of the people who resided there. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who had talked about temperance wished to inflict on these people more public-houses than they wanted. He hoped the Government would resist the Amendment.

*MR. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston) said they were all agreed that there was a very close connection between this question and the question of area. The Committee would have liked to discuss this upon a later Amendment, but having regard to the closure Resolution under which they were carrying on the discussion it was perfectly hopeless that they would ever get to that Amendment which came after the Amendment with regard to the term of years. That being so, would not the Prime Minister take this opportunity of saying what was his view about the question of area? It was clearly open for the Committee to discuss the question. Should the area be the licensing district, or the parish in counties and the ward in boroughs? The answer to that question would go far to solve the matter they were now discussing. If there was any probability that the Government would alter the Bill on that point and allow the justices of the district to apply the statutory scale to the district as a whole, then, of course, they might very well put an end to the discussion on this particular Amendment; but if no change was to be made it was illusory to ask the Committee to postpone the discussion until a time that might never arrive. He supposed it might be said that in every county and in every borough in the Kingdom there were some parishes and some wards where more than the statutory number and some cases where less than the number of licences had been given. He had figures showing that in London there was a large number of areas where the number of public-houses was below the statutory standard, while in many others the number was above the standard. There were many such cases throughout the country, and what was suggested was that the justices ought to have jurisdiction over the whole of their licensing area so that they might be able to say: "Here is a place where there are too many licensed houses, having regard to the statutory scale; and here is another place where there are too few, having regard to the needs and requirements of the population. We will transfer a licence from the place where it is not wanted to the place where it is required." What he and his friends desired was that the justices should have power not to suppress a redundant house to the great cost of the individual who owned it, but to move it to another house in the district. The Prime Minister had said that the people of the second area might not want it. If they did not want it, it would not be done. He did not believe that any bench of magistrates would seek to place a public-house where it was not wanted. Surely everybody knew that in these cases the usual course was that if a district wanted a licensed house the people presented a tremendous petition in its favour, and it was from the Bench that the opposition came in almost every case.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

*MR. CAVE said it was from the Bench that the opposition came. [Cries of "No."] In his experience it was certainly true; it was either from the local Bench or from the confirming committee that the opposition came to the licences. There were many cases where the inhabitants wanted the house, but it was refused by the Bench. Suppose that they had a locality wanting a house, and the authorities were unwilling to grant a new licence on the terms of increasing the total number of licences, why should they not have the power to transfer a house from a place where it was redundant to a place where it would not be so?

AN HON. MEMBER: How is it to be done?

*MR. CAVE said it was done in some cases by removal—a very useful power for the justices to have; and it was done in other cases by the surrender of a licence in one district and the grant of a new licence in another place. The process was simple and easy. It met the needs of one place without doing gross injustice to the individual. He thought it would be for the public benefit that that particular power should be maintained, and it might be done under this Amendment with certain subsequent Amendments. At all events in one way or the other it should be left open to the licensing authorities, so to adjust the total number of licences in their area, as to give effect to the scale laid down in the Bill. He did not understand why the Prime Minister should object to adjustment provided that after adjustment the total number conformed to and did not exceed the statutory requirements.

MR. ASQUITH: It is out of respect to my hon. and learned friend, whose knowledge of these matters is second to none, that I intervene now. The question at issue is that of area and area alone, and I suppose hon. Gentlemen opposite are anxious about this Amendment because they think the question of area will be excluded by the operation of the closure at a later stage. Using such knowledge of language as I possess I construe the word "adjust" as giving power to the justices to shift the distribution of the constituent elements among different areas. If the word "adjust" were substituted for the word "reduce," it would require the justices to retain the total number of licences at their present level. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Whether that be so or not, I do not want to be drawn into the question of area at this stage. I am quite prepared at the proper time to give my reason why the Government have come to the conclusion, after much consideration, that the smaller area is better for the purposes of the Bill than the larger area. Although I have listened with an open mind, as I always do, I do not think that any argument has been used which has shaken my present strong conviction that the small area is preferable to the large area. Let me take a case. Area (*a*) and area (*b*) are sub-areas really because they are part of the licensing area. In area (*b*) there is admittedly an excess of licences above the statutory scale, and in area (*a*) there is a diminution of the number of the licences, but they do not reach the statutory limit. According to my hon. and learned friend the justices ought not to be allowed to reduce the number of licences in area (*b*) unless they correspondingly increase them in area (*a*). [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Then what does "adjust" mean? What is adjustment, if it does not mean that there is no reason whatever for this Amendment?

*MR. CAVE said he did not mean that the justices should not be allowed to reduce the licences in area (*a*), but only that, if they thought there was a redundant licence in area (*a*) and a licence required in area (*b*) they should have power, if they thought fit, to transfer a licence from area (*b*) to area (*a*).

MR. ASQUITH: They can do that now. This Bill does not make the faintest difference in that respect.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Will you read your Bill? Look at Clause 22.

MR. ASQUITH: Clause 22 has nothing to do with the point. I am not dealing with the question of removal at all, or with anything connected with removal. I am dealing with this point: If it is shown in area (*a*), the area in which the number of licences does not come up to the statutory limit, that there is any real reason for a new licence, there is nothing whatever in this Bill to interfere with the existing powers of the justices to refuse or grant a new licence. I am quite sure that the hon. and learned Gentleman will not deny my proposition. There is not the faintest difficulty in the world in this Bill to provide for the legitimate requirements of that area. I do not want to argue the matter in a heated manner, but surely I am right in saying that the question is what is the area you are going to select? It is the area over which the statutory reduction shall be made; and, therefore, the proper and only appropriate time to consider that is when you are considering what the size of the area shall be.

SIR E. CARSON (Dublin University): What we contend is that it would be fair if the adjoining neighbourhood does want a new licence, instead of allowing an application for a new licence to be made, and instead of allowing a monopoly value to be acquired, that you should give power to the magistrates if a licensed house is redundant in an adjoining area, if they think proper, instead of suppressing it to transfer it from (*b*) to (*a*). We do this because we think it would be, in the first place, an alleviation of the hardship you are inflicting by this Bill. It is not as the hon. Gentleman who spoke from below the gangway seemed to imagine, as if the licence removed was to be inflicted on the district against the will of the people. The will of the people will be considered in this case just as much as it would be in an application for a new licence. The whole difference will be that the magistrates will have the power of saying, in their discretion: "Instead of granting a new licence to a man who never had a licence before, we think it fair, instead of destroying the business of a man in the neighbourhood, to give him the right of carrying it on in a district where it is admittedly wanted." That seems to me to be on the whole a perfectly plain and just proposal; and why on earth it should be resisted I cannot understand, except it be that every effort is made at every stage of the Bill to act as unfairly as possible, both on the question of a tribunal and in every other way. The right hon. Gentleman quarrelled with the word "adjust." I do not think it is worth while to quarrel about a word of that kind. But the right hon. Gentleman goes on to say that the licences are to be "reduced" to a certain scale. "Adjust" is a perfectly proper word, and it would become perfectly plain if the Government wanted to do what is fair and right. There is no question of words in this matter, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will accept the Amendment.

*SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER said that the point which the hon. and learned Gentleman had raised was the power of removal of a licence that existed at the present time and was proposed to be taken away by Clause 22. The hon. and learned Gentleman wished to retain that power, but the time to discuss it was when they reached that clause. The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to districts in which he said there were too few licences; that was fewer than was allowed under the maximum. But why were they too few? The justices had power to grant new licences now if, in their judgment, there were too few. If they had not granted new licences it was because in their opinion the number of licences was already sufficient. The hon. and learned Member had said that there were less than the maximum allowed under the Bill, but that was because the maximum number was not required. What the hon. and learned Gentleman wanted was to increase them in that area. It was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition that the demands of a district might grow with the increase of population and that the district might require more licences. But the licensing magistrates had still the power to grant them under the Act, subject to a vote of the people. The whole point came to one of removal. The right hon. and learned Member for Dublin University put the point of removal; but that power existed at the present time, although it was taken away by Clause 22, and it was on that clause that the question raised by the hon. and learned Member for Kingston should be discussed, not now. Another point was the question of area. Hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite wanted the total number of licences to be fixed over the whole of a large borough. That meant that while under the Bill as it now stood the number of houses would be reduced in congested areas, they would get over the necessity for reducing them in the congested areas because the smaller number in other areas would balance them. It was only a device to enable them to have a larger number of public-houses in the small areas.

Mr. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I thought that my hon. friend the Member for Kingston had explained this proposal beyond the possibility of doubt, but the hon. Member who has just spoken does not appear to know now what the proposal is. I put aside the proposal that this ought to be discussed on Clause 22, because having gone so far it would be obviously absurd to sever the discussion that is now taking place and relegate this part to another stage. It is perfectly clear to my mind that the whole difficulty is between the granting of a new licence and the transferring of a licence.

Sir THOMAS WHITTAKER: And the removal.

Mr. LYTTELTON: And the removal. The argument adduced against that by hon. Members below the gangway as well as hon. Members opposite is that it is supposed that the licensing justices are to divest themselves of their discretion, and simply to take a licence where it is redundant and remove it into another district whether the people of that district like it or not. I say that that is a travesty of the whole position. Having a good deal of experience I say that no justices in the country would think of transferring a licence into a district where it was opposed by any considerable weight of opinion. That is a travesty of the present arrangement and a reflection on the discretion of the justices. I do not think such an instance could be found. Again, I think one hon. Member below the gangway was not very much in conformity with the true facts when he said that now and in the future where there was a large new district it was common to find a great body of opinion against the granting of new licences. That is not quite the fact. In cases where there is a new district there is almost always a unanimous opinion in favour of sufficient licences to accommodate the district. Where such is the case what could be more reasonable or more fair than that redundant licences should be transferred to places where they are needed? I know hon. Members opposite are opposed to this because they want to get the monopoly value of the new licences in these districts. When the old licences exist, when it is needful and equitable, having regard to all the circumstances of the area, and the magistrates and the district think the licence should be transferred, why should it not be? It seems to me once more in the light of this that what we are furthering is not a Bill for temperance reform, but a Bill for the acquisition of revenue. This question of removal has been discussed to-day as if it were a new point. Why, in Birmingham, year after year, under the guidance of Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, who is a great temperance advocate, this principle has been advocated—I do not know under what law, and I think it may have been illegal—and many licences have been transferred by consent of the brewers and the licensing authority where they were redundant. On the other hand, the total number of licences were reduced for the better administration of justice and the furtherance of temperance. The willingness of the Government to accept Amendments on this Bill, as the Prime Minister declared they would, is fairly measured and tested by their willingness to accept this most reasonable Amendment.

*Mr. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) said he gathered from the speech of the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley division that it was his view that in places where the number of licences was below the standard the justices did not deem it necessary to add any, believing there was enough. That was not the fact. What happened was that when the justices found a large number of licences in one ward of a district, they were not willing to add to the number of licences in the neighbouring ward. The same thing occurred in rural districts. Surely it was possible that an adjustment could be made in such instances. Hon. Members opposite suggested that justices inflicted licences on places, but such statements should not be made unless proof were forthcoming. If the Government would only listen to the arguments addressed to them from the Opposition side of the House, their position would become very much easier than it was. Considerably less difficulty would arise, and considerably less hardship would be inflicted, if the system of removal, such as had been suggested, were adopted. They were told that this matter more properly arose on Clause 22, and that upon the consideration of that clause was the occasion to discuss it. But what guarantee had they that they would have any opportunity for discussing Clause 22 or for discussing the arrangements on the schedule? He would like to commend to the attention of the Prime Minister a few facts which he would mention. In Leeds there were eight wards with 270 licences, which, according to the scale of area and population of the Bill, would be entitled to 483. That was to say, that in these eight wards they would be entitled according to the schedule to over 200 licences more than they had at present. Take another Yorkshire town. In Hull there were ten wards with only seventy-four licences. According to the scale of the schedule those ten wards of Hull would be entitled to 330. He hoped the Government would take note of these figures and in due time tell the Committee what their proposals were.

*Mr. JAMES HOPE wished to know whether it would be in order for him, in order to meet the objection of the Prime Minister on the question of interpretation, to move "or adjust" at the end of his former Amendment.

*The CHAIRMAN said that if leave were given to the hon. Member to withdraw his present Amendment he would be in order in moving the Amendment he suggested, but if, after it had been decided not to insert "adjust" for "reduce," he wanted to move it as an addition he could not conceive that the hon. Member could comment on it on any ground not now covered by the present Amendment and it would be out of order.

Mr. STUART WORTLEY asked was it not conceivable that the Committee might require both.

*The CHAIRMAN did not think so.

*Mr. BERTRAM (Hertfordshire, Hitchin) said he found it quite impossible to agree with the Prime Minister and the Government in not accepting the Amendment. If the Amendment was accepted it would give opportunity for adjustment in such a case as the following. A borough, say, with a population of 10,000 and two wards would under the Bill be entitled to ten public-houses.

It might easily be that the whole of the public-houses were in one ward, and the licensing justices would have to abolish five houses in that ward, so that only five would be left for the whole borough, which was 50 per cent. less than would be allowed under the schedule for the borough as a whole. One half of the borough would have no licences at all, and the borough as a whole would have five less than the statutory number. It seemed to him that if the Government scheme was one presented for the acceptance of reasonable men, and if it was part of the scheme that the monopoly value was not to be exacted for fourteen years, it was unreasonable to try and exact it as the Prime Minister suggested long before that time had elapsed.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) suggested that the Amendment would not have been necessary if the area had been larger. The Prime Minister had told them that the Government had reasons for having the smaller area. It seemed to him that they could more properly discuss this Amendment if they knew what was the reason for adopting the smaller area, and unless they knew it they could not discuss the question. In view of the considerable number of Amendments put down, could the Prime Minister give them any guarantee that they would ever reach the question of the area?

MR. ASQUITH: It does not rest with me at all.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said there were a number of important Amendments down, and it seemed to him that in the natural course they were not likely to reach the question of area, and the Prime Minister ought certainly to state his reason for choosing the smaller area instead of the larger. He should state it at once, if his reason was satisfactory, because it would sweep away the Amendment of his hon. friend; but they must press that Amendment, no reason having been given sufficient to satisfy them in the difficulty in which they found themselves. He suggested that the Prime Minister might adopt the words "reduce and adjust," not "reduce or adjust," which would be putting the two words in opposition to each other. The adoption of the words "reduce and adjust" would satisfy those who supported the Amendment. He submitted that this was the proper time at which to state the distinct reasons for taking the smaller area instead of the larger.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said he would like to call attention to what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square. He could give an illustration bearing on this question, which had reference to a place in North-East Derbyshire, within five miles of where he lived. It was the village of Creswell, inhabited by a mining community. The colliery company had the ground rents of the tenants. The people of the village opposed having a licence; nevertheless, the magistrates had granted a licence for a house in their midst. He would like to hear what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, had to say in regard to the injustice of the magistrates in that district. He would take good care to let them know his views on that subject. With regard to this particular Amendment he thought there would be a great deal of difficulty in arriving at what its actual effect would be. He was connected with industrial companies in some districts, and he had always prevented, if he could, public-houses being established in them. Many landlords made it a condition that they would not have licensed premises where their property was situate. More especially was that the case in certain districts of Lancashire. As far as he was able to understand the position, if in Ward A there was a less number of licences than the Act admitted, and if in Ward B the number was in excess of the number allowed by the Act, then the effect would be that, as far as B. was concerned, the schedule would not operate at all, and there would be a redundancy of licences. Then they would allow the average to be taken over A and B, and would thus still more increase the number of licences in B, if he correctly understood the Amendments. ["No, no."] As far as he had followed the speeches of hon. Members, he did not think they would take the licences and transfer them to A. They were not dealing with the question of the transfer of the licences at all. Therefore, if in Ward A the number of licences was below the number authorised by the Bill, and if in Ward B there was an excess, the effect, so far as he undertsood, would be that no reduction would take place in B, and it would be subject to local veto to decrease the number. But in many places, in his opinion, the people might increase the number under the scale. If, therefore, this Amendment was carried, they would be giving the people a power to increase the number of licences in particular districts. If the Amendment was adopted the value of the Bill, from his point of view, would disappear in the particular areas to which he referred.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said he was not aware that any hon. Member on that side of the House had suggested the course to which the hon. Member alluded. The appeal made to the Prime Minister, and the case made in support of that appeal, were abundantly clear from what had been said by hon. Members on that side of the House, namely, that in a place where a licence was redundant, it might with great advantage be transferred to another district where it was admittedly required. But the curious thing was that, although the case had been made so clear, not one word had been said in opposition to its merits. The Home Secretary, it was true, had stated some time ago that the Government could not accept the Amendment, but he had not given any reasons; and the Prime Minister had over and over again stated his objections to the proposal on this ground, namely, that the proper place for its discussion would be when they came to the question of the area. He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had stated that he had good reasons to give when they reached that stage, but the Committee were apparently decided that they should have the question discussed at the present stage. Yet not one word had they had from Gentlemen on the front bench opposite against the merits of the proposal contained in the Amendment of his hon. friend. The whole discussion would have to be taken over again when they reached another point. He thought the time had come when they had the right to hear the objections, not only to the merits of his hon. friend's proposal, but as to the time at which the Committee was asked to come to a decision. The case for his hon. friend's Amendment was all the stronger, it seemed to him, because of the fact that the same appeal had been made by hon. Members on the other side of the House in its support.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said he wished to put before the Committee a concrete case. He would take the city of Manchester. They would come to a main road which divided area A from area B. The facts of those too areas were exactly what the Prime Minister had pointed out, namely, that in area A there was an excess of public-houses over what would be allowed by the schedule. In area B, on the other hand, which was rather a newer neighbourhood, there was a very considerably less number of houses than the proportion which would be allowed by the schedule. If he understood the object of the Amendment, it was practically this, that if the magistrates so desired, they would have the power, if the Amendment was carried, to enable a man who had a licensed house on one side of the road, to put to them this proposition: "You propose to take my licence away on that side of the road, because it is in an area which has an excess number of licences. Very well, transfer that licence to the house exactly opposite, on the other side of the road, where it is in an area with a smaller number of licences than is allowed by the schedule." When that request was made, if they left the Bill as he understood the Prime Minister desired and insisted upon its remaining, the effect would be that the man would have his licence suppressed and taken away from him, and if he applied for a licence on the other side of the road in order to keep the customers who had used the old house for many years, he would be subject, in applying for the new licence in the other area, to all the difficulties of monopoly value, and all that kind of thing, while there was the other difficulty of the asking for the permission of the neighbourhood under the local option law. The case he had stated was a concrete instance, and he could give the Prime Minister the name of the street if necessary. It was an instance which was certain to arise under the working of the Bill when it became an Act, if ever it did, and when it arose there would be no question of the neighbourhood agreeing, because the neighbourhood had the licence there now; and it was exactly the same neighbourhood which would be affected, because the two premises which he had given as an illustration were exactly opposite each other, on the two sides of the road. There was no question of value arising, no question of the neighbourhood consenting; and, supposing the Prime Minister laid down, for the purposes of this extraordinarily worded Act, that they were bound to reduce the number of licences in a certain area, it would be simply a case of removing this business from one side of the road to the other. If they reduced the additional number of licences in Manchester—looking at the city as a whole—in accordance with the scheme of the schedule, they would reduce the total number by 33 per cent., but if they took this other method of doing it, and reduced each ward on that principle, and not in respect of the number of licences in wards at present below the scale, they would then decrease the total number of licences in Manchester by 63 per cent. That was a very important point. The question they were discussing on this Amendment was whether there was to be a reduction of 33 per cent., namely, by taking the average under the scale laid down by the Bill, or whether they were to bring about a reduction in cities like Manchester which would be very much in excess of that suggested in the schedule; was there, in fact, to be wholesale confiscation? That was what it practically came to if they reduced the licences in a city like Manchester by 63 per cent., leaving the number of licences in such a city very much less than the average for which the scale under the Bill provided. He ventured to submit that this was a most important point, and thoroughly deserving the time which was being spent upon it.

MR. W. E. HARVEY (Derbyshire, N.E.) said he was acquainted with cases where the magistrates had gone against the will of the people, and in his division they had a case which was a direct negative of what the hon. Member for Kingston had said. A private company were erecting a model village and had laid it out in the interests of the people on the Duke of Portland's estate. The company itself opposed the licence, the people opposed it, and every progressive force in the village opposed it. They fought it before the magistrates, but the licence was granted. The people appealed to Quarter Sessions at their own cost, the company and the clergyman of the village supported them, and yet Quarter Sessions granted the licence. The Conservative agent at the last election was the solicitor on behalf of the opposition to the licence, and he was so disgusted with the transaction that he had come over to his platform. The company which got the licence was not afraid that the Bill was going to ruin the trade or they would not have been prepared to pay the £4,000 monopoly value at once on purpose to have the new house. It was evidence that the trade was not so much in danger as hon. Gentlemen opposite would have them believe. He appealed to the Prime Minister not to give way on this question. He represented the working man, and knew his aspirations, and was glad to realise that there were estates where a condition of the sale of the land was that there should be no public-houses.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is getting very wide of the question. So far as I have been able to listen to him, he has not said a single word about the Amendment.

MR. W. E. HARVEY said he knew a co-operative estate belonging entirely to working men which had not a single public-house upon it. Were they going to transfer licences there where the people did not want them? They were told there must be a discretion left to the magistrates, but the discretion of some magistrates was in the interest of the brewers, and in the interest of propagating the sale of intoxicating drink. He hoped they would have nothing in the shape of this Amendment, which might have the effect of giving licences where people did not want them. He looked upon that as a real danger.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I want to put this point before the Government. It happens at times that you have a ward which is almost wholly occupied by a residential population, of a class which does not use the public-house at all, but you have at the extremity of the ward a working class population. It may—and I think does—happen that the working-class population are at present served by public-houses over the borderland, and within the next ward. It may be, therefore, that you will have cases where, let us say in one ward, there is an excess of public-houses over the population, but not an excess accommodation for the inhabitants of the adjoining ward who use the public-houses. The Government have made an attempt to deal with the question in so far as the excess arises from the day population of the district being very much greater than the night population, and they have a modification in the schedule for dealing with seaside places which have excursionists in large numbers; but there is no provision for dealing with the case which I have mentioned, where the day and night populations are very much the same, but where the frequenters of the public-houses come, to a large extent, from a neighbouring ward. In that case, if you leave the Bill as it stands, you must reduce the public-houses in the overstocked wards, and if you want to provide accommodation for the men who have hitherto come across the boundary you must grant new licences in the other ward. Would it not be fairer and simpler to give the justices power to transfer or to remove the licence from the ward which is overcrowded to the place where the actual frequenters of these public-houses now live, viz., into the next ward just across the boundary? It seems to me that that is a particularly strong case, because what you are doing is not to make a new licence for a new trade, but to make a new licence for the old trade hitherto done by a particular house. If that is to be the case there is great hardship in closing that particular house under the terms of the Bill, with all the disabilities which are inflicted on the licence holder and the very inadequate compensation which he would receive, when you have to create a new licence to satisfy the needs of the district.

*MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.) stated that in north-west Manchester there were 405 on-licences, and under the scale of the Bill this would be 310 too many. The question was very clearly shown in two of the chief wards in Manchester, wards in which there was practically no drunkenness whatever, which had thirty-five licences. Under the scale of the Bill St. Ann's ward would be only entitled to one, because the population was mainly a day population. In St. James's ward, which had forty-five licences, they would be entitled to have only three. It was clear, under the modification clause in the schedule there was a possibility that some authority, not, he gathered, the local justices who knew the facts, might grant a modified scale in respect to these areas. The licensing justices of Manchester, who were not averse to taking away licences when they considered they were not needed, and who had during the last few years taken away a very considerable number, were far better able to decide what licences were needed for these particular wards and therefore were more enabled to adjust the number of licences between the different wards than any Commission under the scheme proposed in the schedule. This was an instance which clearly showed that the words "to reduce and adjust" would be far better than the word "reduce."

*MR. HERBERT regarded this as a case in which the Opposition were asking rather too much and the Prime Minister was prepared to grant rather too little. It seemed to him that the Amendment as it was moved, with the subsequent Amendment, so that the numbers should conform to the schedule, was asking too much, because, as he understood it, the result of that would be that the justices would be bound to increase the number of licences in an area where they were not wanted, and the inhabitants would not be able to veto the introduction of licences by removal. He thought he was speaking for the great majority of Members on that side, temperance reformers and others who were moderate people, when he said they were not prepared to accept that. He would suggest to the Opposition that they should be prepared to accept the leaving out of that subsequent Amendment in accordance with a number of speeches which had been made from the opposite Benches. Then they would have this, that the justices might adjust the licences by removing them from one area to another, but that there would be no obligation upon them to increase the number, and the result of that would be that Section 22 would be left in the Bill, but in Section 2 they would have to add the power of the population in the area to veto the removal of licences as well as the grant of new licences.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I think we had better leave these details until we get further on in the Bill. The real point is whether we are to reduce or adjust.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.) regarded the Amendment as eminently fair and reasonable. The few Members on the benches behind the Government who had broken their silence did not appear to understand it; they were under the impression that someone wanted to give new licences where they were not needed. All that was asked for under the Amendment was that the magistrates should have power to remove licences to districts where under the Bill there would be power to establish new licences. Everyone in the House was in favour of temperance reform and proposed that the reduction of licences should be brought about with a minimum loss to the owners. The position taken up by the Government was that they proposed to reduce the number of public-houses with a maximum of loss to those interested in the trade. If it was wrong to establish a new licence in another area it was equally wrong to transfer an old licence into a district where it was not wanted. Why was it proposed to establish new licences unless they were wanted? That seemed unreasonable and absurd unless the position taken up by the Government was that they wanted to carry out their policy without any regard to the pecuniary interests of those in the trade. That was the only inference to be drawn from their proposal. It was not suggested that they should impose a licence on any district which did not want it, because the magistrates had the same power to resist the removal of a licence as they had to grant a new licence. All they wanted to do was to put on an equal footing the removal of an old licence and the granting of a new one. In that way they would prevent that confiscation of existing licences which this Bill would bring about.

MR. JAMES HOPE said that in order to make it clear that he wished to include reduction by using the word "adjust" he would ask the Government if they would allow him to withdraw his Amendment and add after the word "reduce" the words "and adjust" and take the division upon that.

Leave to withdraw the Amendment was refused.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 326; Noes, 127. (Division List, No. 207.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine

Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm. J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David(MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies,Sir W.Howell(Bristol,S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunne,Major E Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)

Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.Sir W.Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon.S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire.
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald

Macpherson, J. T.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley,W.E.B. (Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Holland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roch, Walter F. (Pembroke)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.

Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann,Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton underLyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward,W. Dudley(Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. McKinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(CityLond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barnard, E. B.
Barry, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach,Hn. Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.
Chamberlain,Rt Hn.J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings,Rt.Hn. J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Craig, Captain James (Down,E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W.V. (Hants, W.
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence (Kent,Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway,Rt.Hon Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col. A.R.
Long, Col. CharlesW.(Evesham
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
McArthur, Charles
McKillop, W.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mooney, J. J.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James
O'Dowd, John
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker,SirGilbert(Gravesend)
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts,S.(Sheffield,Ecclesall
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,SirBerkeleyGeorge D.
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool,Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(OxfordUn.
Thomson,W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)

Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)	Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George	TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord	Young, Samuel	
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart	Younger, George	

*MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) moved an Amendment to insert "old" before "on-licences," the object of the Amendment being to exclude from the statutory reduction new on-licences granted under the Act of 1904. The question, he believed, had been under the consideration of the Government, for at the end of April he put a Question to the Prime Minister as to whether he did not consider that the new licences granted under the Act of 1904 ought to receive special treatment, and the right hon. Gentleman replied that the question was under consideration. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman had considered the matter, and that he would be able to give a satisfactory assurance regarding these licences. An "old licence" was defined in Clause 3 of the Bill to be an existing licence within the meaning of the Act of 1904, and, having regard to that definition, this Amendment, if the Government accepted it, would confine the operation of the Bill to licences existing at the date of the passing of the Act of 1904, and still in existence. Section 4 of the Act of 1904, which dealt with the question of new licences gave power to the licensing justices to grant new licences on special conditions, including the payment of the monopoly value, which was defined to be the difference in value between the premises licensed and unlicensed. He would like to draw the attention of the Committee to what had taken place runde the operation of that section. In looking at the figures for England and Wales in respect of new licences granted during recent years he found that since the Act of 1904 came into operation there had been a great decrease in the number. Perhaps that was what might naturally have been expected. For instance, in 1900 there were 245 new licences granted; in 1904, there were 221; in 1905, which was the first year under the operation of the Act of 1904, there were fifty-three; in 1906, there were fifty-six; and in 1907 there were sixty-eight. Some of these did not come within the operation of subsection (4) of Section 4 of the Act of 1904, but those that did worked out at 164 for the three years 1905, 1906, and 1907, during the time the Act had been in operation. The conditions under which they had been granted included restrictions such as the forbidding of the employment of females except those belonging to the landlord's family, and the limiting of hours during which the houses should be open. He thought he might say that in almost all caess some kind of restriction had been imposed. Large sums of money had been paid down for these licences, some as capital payments, some by annual rent for specified periods. Among the sums paid in 1905 was one amount of £9,000, and in one case £1,500 was to be paid by annual instalments of £100 a year for fifteen years. Evidently in that case it was not contemplated by the Bench that the licence should be terminable before fifteen years had expired. In another case £300 per annum was to be paid from 1906 to 1911, £400 from 1911 to 1916, and afterwards £500. These licences might, under the Bill as it stood, be taken away without compensation, because the compensation did not extend to new licences. In that case a great injustice would be done to people who had made a bargain with the licensing justices and had invested their money in buildings and improvements in accordance with the conditions on which the licenses were granted. The legislature contemplated that these licences would be renewed, because there was no appeal in regard to them, and they were left outside the compensation fund both as regards payment to that fund and with regard to participation in it. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley himself had stated in the debates on the 1904 Act that the question of the abolition of these new licences on the ground of redundancy would not affect them because they would probably be granted in places where there was a considerable population without a licensed house. He thought he had said enough to show that a very strong case had been made out for those licences.

If by the operation of this Bill they were to be taken away, a contract would be broken, and he could not think that even this Government would do injustice to those people who had paid down money and taken their licences under the conditions laid down in the Act of 1904.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'of,' to insert the word 'old.'"—(*Mr. Samuel Roberts.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'old' be there inserted."

MR. ASQUITH: The concluding sentence of the hon. Member was not couched in a very conciliatory vein.

*MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS: It was not intended.

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Member said that even this Government would not contemplate such a gigantic act of confiscation as that against which his Amendment is directed. I have been asked several Questions on this subject by, I think, the hon. Gentleman himself, and I have indicated from the first that there is a case to be met. I think so still, but I do not think it would be best met by adopting the hon. Gentleman's Amendment. When you are dealing with the excessive facilities on the assumption that they should be reduced, it makes no difference to the adding up of the number of licences whether they are new or old. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will see that. I do not think that under the scheme of the Bill we should exclude new on-licences from the computation purposes of this clause. When it comes to the question of extinction—in other words, the selecting of those which shall be the victims—I think that there a case for consideration does come in. They are very few in number. I think that up to the beginning of this year there are not more than 177. They are for the most part, and indeed they must, from the nature of the case, have been granted in places and under conditions by which they will not be subject to statutory reduction at all. They are granted in new building districts where there is a clear need for the creation of new licences in addition to existing licences. But that only minimises the extent of the possible injustice. Now, these licences issued under Section 4 of the Act of 1904, are of two classes. In some cases licences have been granted for a term of years. In other cases they have been granted for a lump sum on payment down—in my opinion a very objectionable practice and one which we intend to put a stop to in the future by one of the provisions of the Bill. As regards the first class, I doubt very much, even as the Bill is drawn, whether they would come under the scope of the Bill at all, because the Bill contemplates that justices in exercising this power, in performing their duty, will make these reductions. The licences which have been granted for a term of years do not require to come up for renewal until that term of years expires. If there is any doubt about the matter, I will see that words are introduced at a later stage of the Bill that when these licences do come up for renewal, then and then only the operation for reduction shall be exercised. So much for that. As regards the other class in respect of which licences were issued for a lump sum paid down, I confess it would be a great injustice if these were selected for reduction. They have been granted since the passage of the Act of 1904 under conditions which require the justices in the public interest to exact from the licence holders the monopoly value, and therefore they stand on a totally different footing from licences under the old Act where no such conditions are or could be imposed. They are few in number, but the amount in some cases must be considerable, and injustice would be done if no provision were made for them. I ask the hon. Gentleman, with that assurance, to withdraw his Amendment. I will endeavour to make the best provision I can to meet the justice of the case, either in Clause 7, which deals with the duty of the licensing justices to give effect to the scheme by selecting the licences to be extinguished in permanence—I will introduce words to make it impossible for these licences to be selected—or, if it is found more convenient from a drafting point of view, the change might be made under Clause 24. I do not think it is necessary at this moment to describe in which of these two places I will insert the necessary words, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept my assurance that what is necessary shall be done and not press his Amendment.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think that after the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, my hon. friend would do well to withdraw his Amendment. I must confess I am extremely puzzled to hear what has been going on under the Act of 1904. I have not followed the matter, but I find from a Return which has been shown to me that in such cases licences were given for sums up to £4,500 and even £6,000. I am perfectly unable to understand how that is consistent with the Act of 1904. Although I am responsible for the Act of 1904, I am not responsible for the administration of that Act. It certainly appears to me that the magistrates have allowed an equitable right to grow up, which is exactly the thing that we wanted to avoid. The value of a licence cannot be £6,000 except with the prospect of renewal, and as there is no statement as to when that clearly arises, all the old difficulty will grow up, or will be liable to grow up under the new scheme. If the Bill puts a stop to that, it is a part of the Bill I will look upon with toleration and even with approval. I think that my hon. friend's point will be adequately met by the undertaking given by the Prime Minister, and under these circumstances I do not see why he should not withdraw the Amendment.

*Mr. CAVE said it should be pointed out that many of the annual licences granted for a lump sum had been granted in Wales. He agreed that it was not a desirable practice. It appeared by the Licensing Statistics for 1907 that of the four new annual licences granted in that year in consideration of a large money payment three were granted in Glamorganshire.

Sir S. EVANS said that if that was the fact, he was not aware that the return was accurate in that respect. However, in deference to his own county he would ascertain whether the return was accurate.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*Mr. TALBOT, in moving to omit the prefix "on" from "on-licences," said the Amendment was one which might be agreed to by hon. Gentlemen opposite without interfering at all with the progress of the Bill. It was only intended to carry out the objects which the promoters of the Bill professed they had in view as the great champions of the cause of temperance. He thought he should have the support of the right hon. Gentleman opposite when he said that if the Bill merely reduced the number of public-houses and did nothing more, they would have done very little in the cause of temperance. Briefly stated, his Amendment was to include in the purview of the Bill what were called grocers' licences. He maintained that no one attempting to deal in a comprehensive manner with this great question by a Bill could do so if it did not embrace within it an adequate treatment of the case of the grocers' licences. He had two or three extracts which he asked the permission of the Committee to read because he thought that they had an important bearing on this matter. In the Majority Report of the Royal Commission on the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, dated 1899, it was stated—

> "We think that there should be a separation of the trades so complete that there should be no sale within the same premises of intoxicants and groceries or other articles. It must be distinctly understood that this separation does not mean the abolition of off-licences."

The Minority Report said—

> "The trade in intoxicants should be forbidden to be carried on in the same premises as the trade in groceries or other articles."

For his Amendment he therefore claimed the authority of both the Majority and Minority Reports of that Royal Commission. He asked the House to listen also to the testimony of three witnesses on the subject. He thought it would be seen that they were not the expressions of bigots and fanatics but of reasonable persons who took a reasonable view of the subject. The first authority was the Bishop of Chester, a well-known authority on this subject, who in answer to a question said in his evidence before the Royal Commission—

> "Evidence has always been difficult to get about grocers' licences, but I am bound to say that the bulk of the testimony seems to me against them. I have been slow to come to a conclusion about it myself, but it seems to me that all the evidence seems to tell in favour of the sale of liquor being disassociated from other businesses."

That was a very moderate judgment, but it was not on that account worthy of less attention. The Rev. Osbert Mordaunt, another witness before the Commission, who had himself conducted a licensed house on what might be called reasonable principles, used these words. They were few, but to the point—

> "I do not like them [*i.e.*, grocers' licences] and would like to see them done away with."

He would quote one other authority, Dr. Norman Kerr, who was president of a society for the study of inebriety. Asked if he regarded grocers' licences as an additional temptation thrown in the way of persons with alcoholic tendencies, he said—

> "Yes, that is my real objection, all the others are subsidiary. . . . This is an addition to the tremendous overpowering number of temptations to drink which already exist."

> "Then you think a grocer's licence is not a substitute for a public licence, but an additional public-house ?—That is it. If it had been a substitute I would have been delighted to see it, but it has been entirely an addition, in England."

He would not trouble the Committee with further extracts, but he hoped he had said enough to show that it was not his own opinion only which he was advocating, but that it rested on high authority, and that the question of grocers' off-licences was a subject that no one who attempted to deal with this question could safely neglect. If the Government were really in earnest and wished to diminish the temptations to drunkenness, which existed not only in this country but in others, they must not rest content to take one class of houses only, in which no doubt temptation existed and which belonged to a particular branch of the community, and neglect to deal with those which belonged to another class of the community. They had seen so much of the evil which what was called "the trade" introduced into this country, that they seemed to think that they should deal with that alone and not trouble themselves at the moment with other matters. But that was a very limited and unfair manner of treating this question, because, in other words, it simply meant that because there was a class of people whom the Government thought to be wrong or unwise they were going to punish them and not going to touch other people who they knew brought the same temptation into the way of those who were inclined to follow it. In these discussions it was often said that drunkenness in the country had diminished. That was true. It was at one time the great reproach of all classes of the community, and the middle and upper classes of the country had no doubt reformed their ways. There was now much less drunkenness in these classes than there was a hundred years ago. But drunkenness had also diminished among the labouring classes. Nobody could walk in the streets of London or other large towns without seeing the enormous difference between the times in which we lived and those which preceded our own. But he was told that while intoxication among men had diminished, among women it had increased. He did not ask His Majesty's Government to accept that from him. He did not know it; he was told so. If it was so, it was an enormous argument in favour of the Amendment, because women did not get their intoxicating liquors so much from the public-houses as from the grocers and off-licensed houses with which they dealt. He did not urge it as an argument for taking away all grocers' licences, but said that if the Government regulated and diminished one set of places for the sale of intoxicants they ought to regulate and diminish the other. He assumed that the chief argument which would be adduced by the Government if they did not intend to accept this Amendment would be that they should deal with one thing at a time; that they were now dealing with the great question of licensed houses, and if there was a case for dealing with off-licences they would deal with them afterwards. The answer to that was that they had no right to deal with this question at all unless they dealt with it as a whole, and dealt with it fairly towards all classes concerned. If there were a danger of the multiplication of these grocers' licences, and at present there was no limit to their multiplication, the Government had no right to say they had not time to deal with them now. They ought to make time. He had now said all he could in support of the Amendment. He would merely add that the influence of what was called "the trade" had no terrors for him; that he was not a nominee of the t ade, and he did not think that the trade could influence his political career. He approached this subject as one who had for many years been charged with the administration of justice and whose desire was to see all temptations to drunkenness diminished.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, to leave out the word 'on.'"—(*Mr. Talbot.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'on' stand part of the Bill."

MR. GLADSTONE: I note that my right hon. friend admits that he stands in a particular position of advantage in not being in any sense a nominee of the trade. I quite admit he speaks on this matter without any influence, undue or otherwise, being brought to bear upon him. He has raised an important point, and I quite agree that it deserves the serious consideration of the Committee. The Committee is entitled to know why we have not included off-licences in this reform. We have seriously considered this point, and I quite agree, if the right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that the conditions surrounding off-licences and on-licences are the same, we can have no reason for not dealing with both in this clause. There is one rather strong argument for dealing with off-licences in this clause, and that is the possible enhancement in value of these licences consequent on a large scheme of reduction. But I must remind the Committee that the Government in 1904 did not include off-licences. I do not say that the conditions were then the same, but they did not include them, and the conditions were sufficiently analogous for us to notice that fact and draw our conclusions as to what had happened since that time. If hereafter it becomes clear that off-licences are materially enhanced in value that may be a consideration, but I do not agree that that will be so. No case has been shown for that. It must also be remembered that the new off-licences are brought under Section IV. of the Act of 1904. But there is no proof that the value of these off-licences will be increased. That is merely a hypothesis. Last year there were 1,800 licences extinguished, and under these circumstances, if the extinction tended to increase the value of off-licences, we should have seen an indication of it during the past years. Not merely has there not been any increase in the value of off-licences, but the tendency has been for the total number of off-licences to decrease; in fact, each year has shown a reduction of two or three hundred off-licences, and that at any rate goes some way to show that the considerable reduction under the Act of 1904 has not tended to increase their value. Therefore, as regards the argument adduced by the right hon. Gentleman, I submit that the case of the on-licences and the case of the off-licences are not *ejusdem generis.* Consequently the argument for the reduction under our Bill of on-licences is based on different considerations from those which apply to off-licences. It is not only the question of redundancy which has induced us to put forward this scheme. Of course, that is a very important matter, but there are other reasons. The reduction of unnecessary public-houses will tend to improve the supervision by the police; it will tend to improve the character of the on-licensed houses that remain. There are other general and economic reasons for the reduction of on-licences quite distinct from off-licences, which were mentioned during the Second Reading debate, and to which I need not further refer now. But these considerations, the ground of policy, the social and economic grounds, are justifications for the reductions of on-licences, but they are considerations which hardly apply, if at all, to the reduction of off-licences. I am not going into the general question of all the evils that may be alleged to attach to off-licences. Those evils are largely connected with what we call "secret drinking." I agree that that is one of the most dreadful forms of intemperance, and if it can be practically dealt with so much the better. But is the proposal in this Amendment a real remedy? There is a great difference between on and off-licences. When there is a wish to drink secretly it is consumed at home. It is not like the general casual wish to drink which often besets a man when passing a public-house. The great evil of secret drinking is that they get the whisky bottle and consume the contents at home. Would the extinction of a few licences have any appreciable effect upon this? It must be remembered as a matter of fact that there are only 25,000 of these licences altogether, as against nearly 100,000 on-licences. The extinction of one or two off-licences a year would not have the same effect as the extinction of on-licences. The case of off-licences is wholly different from the case of on-licences as regards the monopoly value. There is no capital invested; there is no plant or fittings, and the sale of liquor is quite subordinate to the sale of other articles connected with the business. It would undoubtedly be extremely difficult to get at the monopoly value, and in every way, I submit, whether you regard it from the point of view of temperance, or from the point of view of monopoly value, the case is different. If this Amendment is seriously pressed what happens? There will have to be a separate compensation scheme, there will have to be a new scale.

SIR E. CARSON: Why, if there is no monopoly value?

MR. GLADSTONE: I did not say there is no monopoly value. I said it would be very difficult to ascertain. There will have to be another scale. If the Amendment is passed in its present form there will be established a new scheme of compensation for off-licences out of a fund to which only on-licences have contributed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why?

MR. GLADSTONE: That would be the effect of accepting the Amendment in its present form. But I submit that those considerations and those arguments had weight with the Government in 1904 when they did not include off-licences in their scheme of reduction. We have carefully considered the matter. If it could be shown that the inclusion of off-licences is likely to produce any real and substantial effect with regard to the diminution of drunkenness, then I agree that our case for the clause as it stands in this respect would be weakened; but the right hon. Gentleman has given no reasons to show how or why the reduction of these off-licences would bring about improvement in the present condition in regard to temperance. My right hon. friend quoted the Commissioners' Report as to other matters, but I do not think that he quoted anything with regard to this Amendment. I quite agree that he quoted authorities in favour of doing something more, but he did not quote anything in favour of the particular thing which he is now asking us to do. My right hon. friend forgot, I think, when he said that there was no limitation on the number of grocers' licences, that we have Section 10 of the Act of 1904, and he omitted to notice that in Clause 5 of this Bill we propose to bring off-licences under the operation of Section 4 of the Act of 1904. Of course, if a clause is required there will be an opportunity for further consideration later on, but I do not think that any case has been shown for the inclusion of off-licences in this clause; therefore I regret to say that the Government cannot accept the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said his right hon. friend had been perfectly right in saying that he anticipated that the Government would reject his Amendment, but he was very far wrong when he guessed at the reasons which would be given for its rejection. Certainly it had not been his intention to rise if it had not seemed to him that a more futile case for the rejection of an Amendment had never been stated than that which had been submitted to the House. He asked the Committee to consider the grounds on which they were asked to reject the Amendment. First of all the right hon. Gentleman had told them that there was no monopoly value.

MR. GLADSTONE: I said that it was very difficult to ascertain the monopoly value.

MR. BONAR LAW said the right hon. Gentleman could take it either way he liked. If there was anything in the argument, why should these houses with off-licences be included in other sections of the Bill, if they were not to be included in regard to the diminishing of the temptations to intemperance? The right hon. Gentleman was responsible for the police of the Metropolis, and for the police as a whole, and he said that one of the advantages in favour of the Bill was that if there were fewer houses the police would be better able to deal with them. Had the right hon. Gentleman not sufficient police now; was it not his duty to have sufficient police to deal with the houses existing? Could anyone say that it was a solid reason for opposing this particular Amendment? The right hon. Gentleman said that the evil of drinking in connection with off-licences was that it was secret drinking; but on what ground could it possibly be said that an additional number of public-houses would increase the temptation to ordinary drinking, and that the temptation would not be just as great in the case of off-licences? They all knew that a woman, perhaps the wife of a working man, was able to get drink at the grocer's and nowhere else, and if that opportunity was taken away she had no opportunity of getting it. On what possible ground was the temptation not as great in the one case as in the other? The right hon. Gentleman had not stated quite as clearly the ground of the distinction as another member of the Cabinet the other day. The President of the Board of Trade, when speaking in the country, said that the Tory Party, meaning Members on that side of the House, were unable to deal with this question from the point of view of temperance because they were not independent; that they were tied down by the trade. The party opposite was quite free as regarded the trade. They could be trusted to show it no mercy. It was very different when they came to the grocers' licences. Then they had this futile reason given by the right hon. Gentleman why one class of intemperance was dealt with and the other was left entirely alone.

MR. F. E. SMITH said that many of them had attempted to criticise the Bill, but it was reserved to the Home Secretary to destroy it. He had stated that his right hon. friend had not cited a single authority in favour of controlling the number of these off-licences. They heard *ad nauseam* the Minority Report of the Commission referred to on that side of the House. Was the right hon. Gentleman acquainted with the Report? Was he aware of the recommendation there that at the end of five years the number of off-licences to exist was to be fixed by the licensing authority? Was that a recommendation which had no authority at all? It was not necessary to discuss the unimportant point whether his right hon. friend did or did not discuss the authority. What it was necessary to discuss was whether it was or was not an authority to which respect was only to be paid from those benches when it suited them for the purpose of attacking the trade, and from which respect was withheld when it became necessary to defend their political allies. Let him remind the right hon. Gentleman of what their present Leader the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley said in 1904 on the question of off-licences—

> "Everybody admitted the desirability of reducing the number of off-licences. According to the Government the object of the present Bill was to facilitate the reduction of licences. Why, then, should not the same process be applied to both classes of licences?"

He asked why, if the principle upon which the Bill was based had been truly stated, were not both to be included in the same scheme of reduction? The position of the Government as stated was that there existed a direct and demonstrable connection between facilities for obtaining alcoholic drink and temperance. If there was any other principle on which the Bill was based it was time they were informed of it. He accepted that principle, and he asked how could it possibly matter from the point of view of the suppression of intemperance whether the drink was obtained for consumption on or off the premises? The Home Secretary in his felicitous explanation of the distinction lighted upon the possibility that there might be secret drinking. If there was a single distinction depending on principle it was that the case for dealing with off-licences was incomparably stronger because of the facilities which it gave for secret drinking. The right hon. Gentleman laid stress on the fact that there were only 25,000 cases of off-licences whereas there were 100,000 cases of ordinary licences, but the number of off-licences had steadily increased in the last twenty years. In January, 1886, there were 22,267; in 1896 there were 24,041; in 1905, 25,405; and in 1907, 25,281.

MR. GLADSTONE: Read the figures of the last four years.

MR. F. E. SMITH said he would have thought even amateurs in statistical considerations which the promoters of the present Bill had shown themselves to be would be aware that statistics based on a period of four years were of no great value when dealing with a problem at least twenty years old. The Government were deliberately, with full knowledge of the dilemna in which they were placed, and with no argumentative answer to the analogy which was put to them, going to make it impossible to give a complete test of the only principle on which they themselves said their Bill was based. They had done this by refusing to admit the analogy between off and on-licences and by the cowardly and inadequate treatment which they had given to the problem in the provisions of the Bill, For this reason only the Bill would fail in the country. It would fail because the country was not convinced of the *bona fides* of the Government in dealing with the question.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said that the hon. and learned Member was quite incorrect when he said that for the last twenty years the number of off-licences had steadily increased. The important consideration was what had been the recent tendency and not what had been the tendency in the previous decade. The Blue-book showed that the number in 1905 was 25,405; in 1906, 25,281; and in 1907, 25,143—a small but steady decline in these three years. The point was one of very small importance, but if they had figures quoted let them be quoted accurately.

MR. F. E. SMITH: May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether when he rose to speak the first observation he made was not that I was inaccurate in my statement as to the twenty years?

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said they may have increased over the whole period of the last twenty years, but during recent years they had been steadily declining. The hon. and learned Gentleman, however, made a statement of far greater importance, and which was even wider from the facts. He said the Peel Report recommended that at the end of five years the magistrates should reduce the number of off-licensed houses. If that were the case, he agreed that much might be said in criticism of the Government for having omitted off-licences from the reductions proposed in the Bill. But precisely the opposite was the case. The Minority Report recommended that there should be a separation between that part of the premises which dealt with groceries and other goods and that part which dealt with alcoholic liquors at the end of five years, but they made no recommendation that the number should be reduced; and when they made their famous recommendation that the number of licensed houses should be reduced to one for 750 persons in towns and one for 400 persons in the country they said that reduction should apply to on-licences alone. Did hon. Gentlemen who made this proposal wish that licences should be reduced with or without compensation? They had heard that it was not necessary to establish a separate compensation fund, and it would be difficult to estimate the loss that would ensue to an off-licence holder for the suppression of his licence, that it was not necessary to compensate because there was no investment of capital and so forth.

An HON. MEMBER: The Home Secretary said that.

*Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL said perhaps he was wrong, and he did not press that point. It was therefore the proposal that there must be a compensation fund for these off-licence holders and they must assess a compensation levy upon them, and they would have to assess, by some means which no one had yet devised, some method by which their loss could be ascertained. That was a task of extreme difficulty, and before the Government were asked to include any such scheme, some indication should be given how these extremely intricate financial arrangements could be managed. The hon. Member for Dulwich had said the two classes of licences ought to be on the same footing, and the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just spoken had said with the utmost emphasis and with his usual indignation that it was hypocrisy to pretend that there was any distinction to be made between the two, and that if temptation existed in the one case it existed equally in the other. His last words would be a quotation from the late Solicitor-General, who would be interested to hear the words he used on 27th June, 1904. He said—

> "His own view was that the question of the off-licences was absolutely different from that of the on-licences—a difference essential in their existence and historically."

He went on to say—

> "He had always understood that the real reason proposed for the reduction of these on-licences was that a large number of them were in the streets and the villages, and offered a standing temptation to persons passing by to go in and drink on the premises. A very different consideration applied to the privilege of giving beer to persons standing in the bar, and to supplying beer to persons for consumption off the premises. No very acute question as to the necessity for the reduction of those latter houses had arisen at all, and there had been very little agitation in regard to them."

These were also the views of the Government in which they heartily agreed, and he trusted hon. Members opposite would not disavow an expression of opinion so emphatically uttered and so clearly phrased, but would reject the Amendment.

Mr. F. E. SMITH said, with reference to the Report of the Peel Commission, if the hon. Gentleman would turn to page 107 he would find that the minority there were dealing with the whole question of off-licences and not merely with one variety, and what they recommended was that the different kinds of off-licences should be consolidated, and that no new ones should be granted except under the full discretion of the licensing authority. On the following page they said—

> "We will allow a period of five years during which the proposed restriction on the sale of intoxicants to premises exclusively used for that purpose should not apply to premises now holding licences,. During this period no new licences shall be granted and the licensing authority shall come to a decision as to how many new off-licences will be required for the district."

That was the general recommendation and that was precisely what he said as far as the new off-licence holders were concerned, viz., that there was to be a five years' limit.

Mr. LAMBTON (Durham, S. E.) said the hon. Member who had just spoken had pointed out the extreme difficulty of accepting this Amendment and had fallen back upon the Peel Commission. He had also made a quotation from the late Solicitor-General. Neither of those arguments were germane to the question before the House. The hon. and learned Member for Liverpool asked whether this was a genuine temperance measure or not. The whole principle of the Bill was that the facilities for drinking must be reduced in certain areas according to population. The Under-Secretary to the Home Office had pointed out that the Government had fixed a proportion of one public house to 400 people in the rural districts and the Bill proceeded on those lines. He also stated that there would be no reduction of off-licences. His experience was that very often off-licences were perambulating public-houses. The grocer sent round his cart and offered drink to the women in the cottages unknown to their husbands. This was a great temptation to women who otherwise would never get near the public-house in the country districts, and yet this Bill was claimed as a great temperance measure. They had now been told they could not alter this clause because the Government were unable to find out a satisfactory basis of compensation for the holders of off-licences. He thought an Amendment like that they were discussing ought to have had some more considered answer than had been given, and he invited the right hon. Member for Spen Valley and the hon. Member for Appleby to speak upon the Amendment and inform the House what was the view of the temperance party upon it.

*MR. MACLEAN (Bath) did not think that the scheme of the Government dealt with what was an admitted evil in the shape of a trade in intoxicating liquors being carried on with other trades, such as grocers' licences. There was a very large body of opinion throughout the country in favour of dealing with the evil which arose in that trade. He did not, however, think the Amendment before them would suffice to deal with the question, as it went to the root of the whole Bill. Judging from the remarks of the Home Secretary towards the close of his speech he was inclined to think that the Government were hoping to have further suggestions made on this point, and he was hopeful that they would seize an opportunity of dealing with this admitted evil. The quotation which had been made from the Peel Report in regard to the five years' limit dealt exclusively with grocers' licences, and it stated that the question of how to deal with the existigu off-licences held by grocers still remained to be dealt with. The proposition there was that at the end of five years no premises should be allowed to sell intoxicating liquor by off-licence unless the premises were exclusively devoted to the sale of intoxicating liquors. That was an admitted evil owing to the fact that people could go to a grocer's shop and secretly obtain intoxicating liquors, and this led to the most gross and evil habits of drunkenness. In conclusion, he repeated his regret that this particular evil had not been dealt with by the very easy method suggested by the Peel Commission Report. He sincerely trusted that the Government would see their way before the Bill emerged from the Committee stage to deal with this point.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I take an interest in this point because I think it is the touchstone of the sincerity of the Government in dealing with this question in regard to the professions they have made up and down the country in reference to the present Bill. No human being denies that this Bill inflicts a great hardship upon a large class of the community; that has not been denied by its most strenuous supporters. It has been admitted by the right hon. Member for Spen Valley that this Bill will reduce the property of licence holders by a great many millions, and every hon. Member knows from his own personal experience how much bitterness this particular method has aroused and how great the individual hardship is which will be inflicted upon many classes of the community in every part of the country. And what is the particular salve which hon. Gentlemen opposite have applied to their consciences for inflicting this hardship? They have constantly said that the Bill may be a hard one, but they have the morality of the public to consider. I may point out that we have heard nothing about the temperance problem from the last two representatives of the Government who have spoken. The Under-Secretary for the Home Office contented himself by basing his justification for the exclusion of off-licences upon the Act of 1904. I wish he had taken the lessons of that Act in some other respect as well. The Home Secretary himself did not touch upon the question of temperance. He told us that there was a great difference between the off and the on-licence, and that, after all, by diminishing the number of on-licences you enable the trade to be carried on under better conditions and you improve the facilities for police supervision. Are we seriously to be told that this Bill is really a measure for improving the opportunities for police supervision? Is that what the cause of temperance has come to? Is that the ground on which you are going to create turmoil from one end of the country to the other, and to inflict all the hardships to which I have referred? Is the only object the Government have in view to prevent men drinking and to enable the police to have improved supervision?

MR. GLADSTONE : I only mentioned that as a subsidiary reason. My main reason was the redundancy of licences and the existence of an unnecessary number of public-houses which led to unnecessary drinking.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : I am not going to be led into a discussion as to how far redundancy leads to increased drinking. That argument may be right or it may be wrong. What I want to ask is, if redundancy in on-licences produces these evil effects, are no such effects to be anticipated from the redundancy in off-licences ? What was the other excuse given by the right hon. Gentleman ? He said it would be very difficult to make a scale to deal with the monopoly value. There might be difficulties, but they do not seem to weigh with the Government, because in Clause 5 of this Bill all the provisions of the Act of 1904 with regard to the monopoly value in the case of new licences are transferred to new off-licences. If there was no difficulty in regard to assessing the monopoly value of new off-licences why should there be any difficulty in discovering the monopoly value of old off-licences. Apparently as far as the Government are concerned it is obvious what is the monopoly value of a new off-licence, and they are quite ready to transfer without alteration or modification all the provisions of the Act of 1904, dealing with the monopoly value of on-licences, but with regard to old off-licences, the problem, according to the view of the Government, becomes so obscure and difficult that it is quite impossible to carry out a reliable calculation. It is quite plain, and everybody can see what the reason for the omission of off-licences is. The hon Member who has just sat down regrets that this omission has taken place, and he hopes it will be remedied. He must know, however, that his regrets are vain and his hopes fallacious. He must know that the Government when they framed their Bill must have had this difficulty present to their mind. They profess that the cause of temperance is bound up with the cause of diminishing the number of places where intoxicating liquor can be obtained. In fact, that is the whole basis of their Bill. It is on this account that they call themselves great social reformers, and on that they base a claim for themselves that they are the great upholders of morality, and that the Members of the Opposition are only influenced by electoral considerations. If they hold that view how can they as honest men bring in a Bill which deals with only one of the three great sources from which intoxicating liquors are obtained ? To obtain intoxicating liquors people may go to the public house, to the grocer, or to the club. These advocates of temperance who are going to stake their political future upon the great moral contest in which they are engaged, only dare to deal with one of the three great sources of drinking. I am not now going to argue the question of clubs, but surely we have a right to hear some better argument in regard to the remaining sources from which intoxicating liquors are obtained than those which have been given us. I am utterly unable to understand how hon. Gentlemen opposite can go about the country talking about morality in that superior strain which has become habitual to them, when they know perfectly well that one of the motives which has animated them, or has animated some of them, in this crusade against on-licences, is their aversion to a particular trade and their desire to appropriate the monopoly value—the value of some of the property of that trade. That is one of the reasons why they include on-licences in the Bill. The reason they do not include off-licences and clubs in the Bill is that they are afraid of quarrelling with their political friends, while they like to plunder their political enemies. That may or may not be very good politics, but I earnestly trust that after this debate and after the defence—the only presumable defence—which the Government has for this omission is known to the country we shall hear no more from them about morality.

* SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER remarked that the Committee had had an excursion into the region of morality on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. They had been taunted on his side of the House with a lack of sincerity. They were told that their motive was an

aversion to the trade, and that they were after money. So far as he was personally concerned it was untrue—absolutely untrue and unfounded. He was not actuated by aversion to the trade, but he was actuated by a desire to promote sobriety in this country. It was only essential to secure the monopoly value in order to secure control. He was anxious about temperance. He admitted that he wished that the Bill did deal with grocers' licences; but he looked with a great deal of suspicion on the anxiety evinced by hon. Gentlemen opposite in that matter. With them it was always "not thus and not now, but in some other way." He and his friends wanted the late Government to deal with off-licences in 1902, and it was their own Party that prevented them from bringing off-licences under full control. The late Lord Ritchie—then Mr. Ritchie—brought in a Bill to bring off-licences under full control, and they were defeated by their own Party, and now that was the Party which taunted them and challenged their *bona-fides*. There were four times as many on-licences as off-licences, and he and his friends wished for a reduction. Surely the value to the community of reducing on-licences would not be lessened because they did not also reduce off-licences by this Bill. He would rather have both off and on-licences dealt with, but if he could not get both he would be glad to get a reduction in the on-licences. Hon. Members opposite objected to dealing piecemeal with these matters, but they did not raise that objection to the Bill of 1902. That Bill did not touch on-licences. It did not contain a reduction scheme with respect to them.

SIR E. CARSON: We were not robbing the licence holders.

*SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER said they were not robbing, the robbing had been done in other directions. The Bill of 1904 did not deal with off-licences, and the right hon. Gentleman did not object to the absence of any legislation with respect to off-licences then. This was a newly developed zeal. The right hon. Gentleman voted against this Bill as a whole, his object being to kill it. He wished the Bill included grocers' licences, but a reduction was going on in off-licences. The official volume of licensing statistics showed that between 1905 and 1908 off-licences were diminished. The Opposition told them there was no need to do anything to increase the rate of diminution of on-licences, but they complained because the Government did not go in for reducing off-licences more rapidly. The Act of 1902 provided that off-licences should come under full control as soon as the then holders of them ceased to be holders. The result was that grocers' licences were more and more coming under the power of the justices, and, therefore, the position was a steadily improving one with regard to them. This Bill prohibited the "off" sale of drink by clubs, and therefore was going to considerably diminish the "off" sale of liquor. The object of the Amendment was to enable the justices to take into consideration the total number of on and off-licences in their district, and that meant that the justices would be able in making a reduction to choose among both on and off-licences. Now they saw the inwardness of the proposal. Hon. Members opposite would abolish off-licences. They did not want to abolish any, but when it came to a choice between on and off they would slaughter the off. The principle of the Bill was two-fold—reduction and control, and control was far more important than reduction. The supporters of the Bill wanted to make a reduction in the great redundancy of on-licences. He thought they could get control at the end of the period. The Leader of the Opposition had said that this applied the touchstone to their sincerity. It might apply the touchstone to their practicability. The Opposition wanted them to go for all or nothing. [Cries of "No."] Well, they wanted the Government to put everything in this Bill. He and his friends would like to have everything in a Bill, but because they could not get everything they were taunted for being willing to take less. The question of off-licences could be dealt with in another year in another Bill. The object of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite was to kill the Bill, and, therefore, they would like to overload it. They would tempt the Government to put more cargo on the ship than it would carry. He could imagine a better Bill than this, but he was glad to have this measure because it was a good one. He would like to see grocers' licences included, but he was not going to be a party to the overloading of this Bill in any direction, and in that way risk its success. The Bill was not perfect. There never was a perfect Bill brought into the House. It was, however, an admirable Bill—the best dealing with the liquor traffic that had been brought in in our time. He would not be a party to pressing the Government to make additions to the Bill which they said they could not accept. If they could see their way to put in grocers' licences he would be pleased, but he was not going to be tempted to support proposals to overcrowd it which were made with the deliberate intention of sinking it.

***MR. G. D. FABER** (York) was astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down say that on the Ministerial side of the House they did not want to kill the Bill by accepting this Amendment. How would it kill the Bill if grocers' licences were included? The friends of the Government were the only people who would kill the Bill if this Amendment were adopted. He was surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman using an argument of that kind. The right hon. Gentleman said that grocers' licences were being reduced, but in 1902 he said that whatever the system might be he contended that all licences should be on the same footing, and that grocers' licences were increasing, while the number of ordinary licences in proportion to the population was decreasing pretty considerably. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that the whole position of matters had changed since then? In those days the right hon. Gentleman was seeking to sweep grocers' licences into his net, but now he adopted exactly the other line of argument. He did not want to sweep grocers' licences into his net under this Bill. He would like to know from the right hon. Gentleman why his whole argument had changed since 1902, when he wished grocers' licences to be brought under the justices, while to-day he said it was not worth while, at any rate in this Bill, because grocers' licences were decreasing. Anything which the right hon. Gentleman said on the question of temperance was important, and he would like to quote what he said when referring to grocers' licences in 1902. What the right hon. Gentleman said then was—

> "That the great increase of drunkenness in women had been caused by grocers' licences, and this statement was borne out by the evidence of clergymen and ministers and medical men who went into the homes of the people. It was most among the middle and the upper classes that this evil existed."

And then the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that—

> 'Those terrible facts were borne out by the testimony of medical men and keepers of inebriate homes. The Licensing Commission said there was a gigantic evil existing in their midst, which was a national degradation; and they declared that scarcely any sacrifice would be too great in order to cope with this evil."

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: That does not refer to grocers' licences.

***MR. G. D. FABER**: Yes, pardon me; it does. At an earlier period of the same debate the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Now, one word as to the evils of grocers' licences. They have enormously developed intemperance among women. It is said that there has been no evidence. There has been a great deal. When the Lords' Committee said that they had not had evidence, I say that negative evidence is of little value as against positive. It is twenty-three years since that Committee sat, and we have had a great deal of evidence since then. Before the Peel Commission we had the evidence of solicitors that again and again they had had to deal with cases brought before them by their clients, in which wines and spirits had been supplied to the wives of their clients, and charged in the accounts as other articles. Then there was evidence of the assistants who sold the liquors."

And then the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "We have practically the universal opinion of clergymen, ministers and doctors upon this point. They get the knowledge in the course of their professional work; and it is not information and evidence that they can give publicly, because their relations with the people from whom they obtain this evidence is confidential. You have, however, the word of honour of medical men, clergymen, and ministers that they know of these cases, and they have declared that such things constantly occur."

The right hon. Gentleman went on page after page on the same lines.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: I said during the last five minutes that I did wish the Bill had dealt with grocers' licences.

*MR. G. D. FABER: Then is the right hon. Gentleman going to vote for this Amendment?

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: No.

*MR. G. D. FABER: Then I should like the right hon. Gentleman to tell me what he means when he says that if you carry this Amendment it will sink the Bill.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: If the hon. Member opposite did not think it would, he would not support the Amendment.

*MR. G. D. FABER said he had the greatest respect and admiration for the right hon. Gentleman's pre-eminent talents. He had had the honour of sitting on important Committees with him, and there was no limit to the lucidity of his intelligence and of his ability; but that was not the specific answer he expected when he put the specific question to him as to how the Amendment would sink the Bill.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: It is rather difficult to carry this on by question and answer, but it is quite possible to overweight measures. Everybody knows that, especially at this time of the session. The Government have decided that they cannot carry it if they put in everything about grocers' licences, and it is for them to decide what they can carry. I should be glad if they could, but if they cannot I shall support the Bill as it is.

*MR. G. D. FABER said that the right hon. Gentleman would not consider that he was saying anything offensive or objectionable when he told him that it was surely an open secret that he, and not the Government, was the Bill. Therefore, it was with the right hon. Gentleman's full cognisance that the grocers' licences were omitted from the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman wanted to shuffle off the responsibility by saying that it was the Government's Bill; that it was their affair. But it was his affair; the right hon. Gentleman had some very good reason for excluding grocers' licences from this measure, and he would like the right hon. Gentleman to tell the Committee frankly what that reason was.

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER: I had nothing to do with the exclusion of grocers' licences.

*MR. G. D. FABER said that political reasons had kept the grocers' licences out of the Bill. In the trade hon. Gentlemen opposite saw their enemy, and in the grocers their friends. He was not telling the right hon. Gentleman anything he did not know himself. That fact lent crushing weight to the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition that this was the touchstone of the sincerity of the promoters of the Bill. The Party opposite had professed that they were bringing in a broad measure of temperance reform; the public had never heard until now that this was only a partial measure of temperance reform. The Radical Party had been preaching up and down the country that this was a great, comprehensive temperance measure. They had tried to get the Bishops into their net by telling them that. But now, for the first time, the chief protagonist of temperance told the Committee that this was only an instalment, but that sometime and somewhere—they knew what that meant from a politician, he supposed at the end of fourteen years—grocers' licences would be dealt with. That was not good enough for men of common sense. He did not pretend to a knowledge of the wiles and artifices of political life. He was a plain man who tried to see the truth and to do justice. It was a hypocritical pretence that they made for leaving out grocers' licences from the Bill, which, in the view of the right hon. Gentleman himself, contained within themselves the germs and a fruitful source of intemperance. They were keeping the grocers out of the confiscation to be brought about by the Bill, because the grocers were their political friends and the publicans their political foes.

That device would take in nobody. The course which the Government had taken had stripped off their cloak and had exposed in all its nakedness the hypocrisy which had surrounded their proceedings from beginning to end.

*Mr. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing) said he had never ceased to regard the principles of this measure as unsound because of the refusal to deal with grocers' licences and clubs. There was all the difference in the world between this Bill and the Act of 1904. This Bill purported to be a temperance measure. The Bill of 1904 was brought in order to put an end to the injustices which were taking place by reason of the decision of the House of Lords. It was a Bill to regulate the drink traffic in relation to particular licences, and while it left the justices a discretion to say which licensed houses were in their opinion redundant required them to refer such licences to quarter sessions in order that compensation might be assessed. That and that only was the limitation put upon the discretion of the local or licensing bench. Hoardings in streets were now covered with pictures by the temperance party, which were as bad a misrepresentation of fact as the Chinese labour cartoon, for they indicated or allowed to be inferred from their suggestiveness that which was not true. For many years before the Act of 1904 was passed, which compelled a grocer to pay a sum which in some degree represented the value of his licence, there was no form of licence more keenly sought after than a grocers' licence, especially when grocers got opportunities for selling beer on draught as they used to get, for it was not within the power of the benches to impose conditions, a state of things which the much abused Act of 1904 put an end to. The trade done by that grocer out of beer was out of all proportion to his legitimate trade as a grocer. The great objection to leaving the grocers' licence out of the Bill was that it would encourage secret drinking. They had had speeches from the right hon. Member for Spen Valley, who told them that a grocer's business conducted in conjunction with an off-licence was a terrible thing for increasing secret drinking among women. Those who had sat on the county asylums Committees as he had done, were able to speak with the authority of personal knowledge as to the effects of a long persistence in excessive drinking by women in comfortable circumstances and who were not frequenters of licensed houses, but who purchased exciseable liquors from grocers and had them sent home with the ordinary commodities of a grocer for household use. It was a sad thing to examine these cases (and they were by no means infrequent), and to hear the records of those people who had come before them, respectably dressed women, and to know that their incarceration had been due to secret drinking. He had heard of connivances to which people with grocers' licences had found it necessary to resort in order to dispose of their liquor. He would give one instance where a London firm which desired to further their business, invented a bottle-carrier as being the safest means of carrying bottles of drink home. But from North Wales came a most indignant protest in reply to an invitation to purchase this kind of carrier. He had a letter to the following effect—

> "February, 1908.
>
> "Gentlemen,—I received your paper bottle carrier, and circular, and I should not have wrote to you at all, only I am so surprised that you should dare to place such a bag upon the market even in London, under the present condition of the trade; here it would ruin the best house in North Wales if you gave a customer a bottle of spirits in a bag so that anyone would know its contents.
>
> "I keep a supply of small fish baskets, and rub them all over with fresh herrings so that they smell. On Sundays we close all day, and on Saturday I get orders to send beer and spirits, etc., in bags, marked potatoes. Take a sack, put each bottle in straw envelope and drop them in.
>
> "My man then takes them on his back and delivers them like potatoes, each one does it, and everyone knows it is done, but the people here are so under the dominion of the chapel parson who rules them with a rod of iron that they dare not be seen drinking either at home or in a house.
>
> "Take my advice, make a carrier that looks as though it carried something else, and you will sell millions."

*The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Member can only deal with the question of principle and not the details of individual cases and methods of doing business.

*Mr. NIELD asked how, if they were not allowed to give details, hon. Members could put their case, and what was a more fitting opportunity than the Committee stage of a Bill to deal with these matters of detail? He only desired to show the mischief. There it was, and yet this Bill made no provision to control these means of obtaining drink—so disastrous as they had proved to family life and happiness—nay the Government, whose views had been voiced that day by the Home Secretary, had refused to make any provision in this professedly "temperance measure." The language the Committee had heard from the Treasury Bench showed conclusively that this was not honest legislation and that if the Government were going to make good the boast they had made up and down the country they must for shame's sake deal with this branch of the trade which did more harm than any other.

MR. SEDDON said that when he first looked at this Amendment he was inclined to be in favour of it. He had a great suspicion of the grocer's licence. He had spent some years of his time retailing groceries and liquors and he had a very full knowledge of the evil effects of grocers' licences and would like to see them included in the scope of this Bill. But having listened to the speeches of hon. Members above the gangway on the Opposition side of the House he had discovered that those hon. Gentlemen were not so much interested in licensing reform as they were in playing off one section against the other. They, therefore, were the hypocrites.

AN UNIONIST MEMBER: It is not our Bill.

MR. SEDDON said the Leader of the Opposition had waxed eloquent over the hypocrisy of this Bill as a measure of temperance reform. He would advise the Government therefore to enter into som arrangement with the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition who wanted the inclusion of clubs and grocers' licences, and invite the right hon. Gentleman to say that if this Bill was made to include those matters it should pass the House without opposition. The object in the Amendment was not to further temperance, but to create another vested interest. The Opposition had been if not the parents, the sponsors of every monopoly in this country. They had the monopoly as it existed with regard to the brewers to-day, and they now sought to create another with regard to grocers' licences. He did not think it was quite so easy to deal with this as had been suggested. To deal with the grocery licences under this Amendment would require a compensation scheme. But this Bill was going to deal with these licences in the future in Clause 5. There were only 25,000 of them at the present time, and if the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley was right that the inclusion of these licences would spoil the Bill, he was quite justified in adopting the principle that half a loaf was better than no bread. If he thought that the Opposition was sincerely in favour of temperance reform in moving this Amendment, he would support it, but believing as he did it was pure hypocrisy on their part, he should vote against it.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said he had never shared nor did he believe the majority of the party to which he belonged ever shared the view that a great temperance reform was to be effected by a reduction of the number of licences. He did not think his right hon. friend ever thought the Bill he passed in 1904 was going to have that effect; but the Government and their supporters had proclaimed throughout the country that this Bill was a great measure of temperance reform, and that by this method they intended to achieve a great deal of good because it was going to reduce a great number of licences. The Amendment offered them an opportunity to take a lot of licences of a description which all who had studied the question admitted led to intemperance and secret drinking. It could not be urged that the adoption of the Amendment would kill the Bill by overloading it, because, although that might be a very proper reason for not accepting a reasonable Amendment if free discussion were allowed to take place on the Bill night after night, it could not be used when the Government had a tame majority behind them who consented to the stoppage of free speech in the House whenever it suited an autocratic Minister. There could be no excuse for the somewhat extraordinary action that the Government had taken. Their last excuse would be found to be on a par with the others they had given, and there could no longer be any doubt in the minds of reasonable men that this Bill was aimed at a particular trade, and made no attempt to check the drinking habits of the people. That, in itself, showed that the hypocrisy was not confined to the Opposition side of the House.

*MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) said the somewhat sudden recognition on the part of hon. Members on the Opposition side of the evils caused by off-licences was as refreshing as it was new. For nearly two whole days they had listened to the assertion that it was absolutely necessary to secure that a public-house should be in reach of every part of the population. Hon. Members opposite had declared that the Bill was a fierce onslaught on the pleasures of the poorer classes. Now their tone had changed, and instead of asserting that opportunities for drinking were required, they accused the Government of failing in their duty because they did not diminish such opportunities as far as off-licenced premises were concerned. He hoped the speeches of hon. Gentlemen opposite would not be forgotten when in another part of the Bill off-licences were to be dealt with. He could only say that as an earnest temperance reformer he would be delighted to support hon. Gentlemen opposite in strengthening the Bill in the direction of the reduction of licences. The Majority Report of the Licensing Commission recommended the inclusion of off-licences in a reduction scheme which was part of their proposals for dealing with the licensed trade. The Minority Report recommended that at the end of five years there should be a complete separation of the licensed trade from any other trade carried on, the five years presumably being given so that the adjustment might be made. He fully supported the recommendation of the Minority Report, but the late Government did not carry out either recommendation, but in the Act of 1902 set up a privileged class of off-licensed holders, giving them a life interest in their licences. Except on specified grounds the Bench could not take those licences away from anyone, but over all other off-licences the justices had full discretion, and when renewal was refused no compensation was granted. When the Opposition taunted the supporters of the Government with leaving them out of the present clause, because of the support grocers gave to the Government, he would suggest that that was a double-edged weapon, and that hon. Gentlemen opposite might be said to have left out grocers' licences from the Act of 1904 because they did not care to give them that protection which they were glad to give to the trade. It was very easy to hurl these accusations across the floor of the House, but he thought it would be a great deal better if they were left out of the debates altogether. He made no accusation against the party opposite for not having dealt with off-licences in the Act of 1904. He presumed they thought they had dealt with them fairly and equitably in the Act of 1902. For himself as a temperance reformer he must say that, if he had had the shaping of the Bill, he would not have included grocers' licences in this clause. There was no compensation at present for the non-renewal of grocers' licences. There was then no reason why a new vested interest should be set up by bringing them into a scheme in which they had no place. There was no need to have insurance for grocers' licences, because they had no claim for renewal apart from the life interest in the 1902 licencees. Therefore, if they had dealt with them in this clause, they would have had to have had machinery for the purpose and to have made the holders pay a compensation levy, because he supposed it would not be suggested that the same basis would do for grocers' and on-licences. If they were going to deal with the question, they could not possibly do so in the same clause by which they dealt with the on-licences. They would have to have a separate clause later in the Bill. He could claim to be as eager to do away with grocers' licences as any Member of that House, but, in his opinion, the Government had decided wisely not to include grocers' licences under this clause. They had, however, dealt with grocers' licences in a much greater degree than the Opposition had given them credit for. The justices had full discretion over all grocers' licences, except the privileged licence-holders under the Act of 1902. Under Clause 2 there was the popular veto over new grocers' licences, and under Clause 5 new grocers' licences would be brought under the operation of the beneficent Clause 4, which, in a moment of inspiration, the Leader of the Opposition placed in his Act of 1904; and at the end of the time-limit when the privileged holders of 1902 would very largely have disappeared practically all the "off"-licences would come under the discretion of the justices. He recognised that the grocers' licences, under the operation of the discretion of the justices, were steadily diminishing at the present time. The figures quoted by the hon. Member for Liverpool did not tell the whole truth in regard to the matter. He was very careful to stop at the date which justified the statement that they had steadily increased. If he had taken the years just before and since 1902, he would have seen the result of bringing grocers' licences under the discretion of the justices. He had some figures, but he would not take them all; he would take wine off-licences. There were in 1896 4,600 wine off-licences; they gradually increased up to 1901 when they numbered 6,750. Then came the Act of 1902, and the effect of that was very quickly felt. In 1905, instead of there being 6,750 wine off-licences, there were 6,373, and by 1907 they had sunk to 6,119. There had, therefore, in the course of five years from the passing of the Act of 1902, been a reduction of no less than 10 per cent. A similar reduction had taken place in other "off"-licences. The right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench was, therefore, absolutely right when he stated that instead of there having been that steady increase to which the hon. Member for Liverpool referred, there had been going on a steady diminution in the number of "off"-licences. When he had said that, however, he must add that he was not satisfied with the proposal of the Bill, and he would be thankful for this debate if, later, he had the support of hon. Gentlemen opposite, in dealing effectually with "off"-licences.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) said that no one would doubt the sincerity of the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, and many of them had felt sorry for him in the excuses he had had to make for not supporting the Amendment. He feared, however, that his thoroughness in the advocacy of temperance had been somewhat affected by his reasons, and he felt disposed to follow the example of the hon. Member who had quoted poetry and say he thought hon. Members were ready to—

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

They had attacked public-houses and were actively supporting the holders of "off"- and grocers' licences—a form of industry which contributed largely to their party funds. They were adhering to the principle of favouritism, and he was sorry to see it in a matter of temperance reform. There was no one who had had experience in the big cities and towns who did not feel that it was quite as necessary that off-licences should be dealt with and diminished as public-houses. There was one street in his own constituency where there was a good deal of disorder. He spoke to the chairman of Quarter Sessions about it. He told him that a short time ago they took away the only off-licence there. From that time the character of the street entirely changed for the better, and it was hardly to be recognised as the same place, although there were still too many public-houses. According to the Blue-book on licensing the grand total of convictions for drunkenness was 197,064, and the convictions on licenced premises were 1,329. They could all judge from their experience how much drunkenness had arisen from "off"-licences. It was a common experience to see men with carts travelling round the streets hawking liquor. They said it was an order from individuals, but the orders were of an exceedingly doubtful nature. It was a distinct revelation to see the number of bottles delivered on Saturday and other nights, and of the 197,000 convictions the greater part by far must be attributable to "off"-licences. Where, if that was not the case, were the police? Where were the police if these convictions were in licensed premises? Why had they not been able to obtain more than 1,329 convictions?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The hon. Member is mistaken. That is the number of convictions of licensed persons.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER said the fact remained that the police were there, and they could easily have carried the matter further by obtaining a greater number of convictions for selling drink to drunken persons. If it was possible that a case could be made out that all the drunkenness arose from the public-house, they should have had some statistics to show it. But that could not be done, and they had to judge by the knowledge they possessed, and he challenged the Government to ask the chairmen of Quarter Sessions what was their opinion as regarded the causes of drunkenness. They would find that it was to off-licences and not on-licences that drunkenness was due. If that was so he failed to understand why those leaders of temperance—the hon. Members for Westmoreland and Spen Valley—did not join the Opposition on this Amendment. The Opposition were as sincere as hon. Gentlemen opposite in attacking drunkenness, and it was because they were unable to induce hon. Gentlemen opposite to join in supporting the Amendment, and because gentlemen opposite were attacking a trade to which they were distinctly hostile, and were displaying a friendliness towards those forms of drink-selling from which they obtained active political support, that he hesitated to think they were really earnest in their advocacy of this Bill.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said he did not propose to enter at all into the general considerations of this question. He, personally, had no interest in off-licences. He had a certain interest, not a very great one, in on-licences, and because he considered this Bill grossly unjust to them, he was unable to support any Amendment which would bring within its scope any other class of licences. He thought that was perfectly consistent, infinitely more consistent than the attitude of the Government. For glaring inconsistency he was bound to say the Government attitude was quite exceptional. He certainly felt sincere pity with the position in which the Home Secretary found himself in endeavouring to justify opposition to an Amendment to which the front bench had previously been pledged. He was not in that position. He regarded this Bill as grossly unjust to those interests with which it dealt, and he congratulated off-licence holders upon the fact that for some occult reason they had not been included in the Bill. He merely rose to say that he was unable to support the Amendment.

MR. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) said he approached this question as one who had always been in favour of the abolition of grocers' licences; his name had been on the back of Bills for that purpose for over twenty years, and he asked himself the question whether this Amendment would promote the purpose he had in view. His belief was that the reduction in grocers' licences under the existing law would be progressive. Since 1902 the reduction had been considerable, and the number of privileged licence-holders—that was to say, the grocers who had carried on their busiess in the same premises—would continuously diminish, and therefore the number who were exposed to the judicial discretion of the magistrates would progressively increase. He very strongly objected to introducing grocers' licences into the clause in such a way as would give them a right to a fourteen years run. He had been very gratified to find that the evils of grocers' licences had been so strongly realised on that side of the House, and one was justified in saying that within fourteen years a Bill would be carried giving effect to what the Amendment proposed. He would regret bringing grocers' licences under a compensation system and a system which would give them a longer duration of life than he desired them to have.

MR. PATRICK WHITE said that among the inconsistencies of hon. Gentlemen who sat on the other side, it was gratifying to find that the hon. Members for Appleby and Spen Valley agreed that the grocers' licences should come within the absolute discretion of the magistrates. They regarded that as a happy sign. All they asked was that the off-licences should also be left in the hands of the magistrates. He failed to see why what was good for the grocers' licences was not good enough for the on-licences. There was no reason on that side of the House against any licence-holder, but the Bill taxed on-licence holders for the licences which were abolished and did nothing to diminish the growing position of the off-licence holders. That was very unfair treatment. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley said that this was the best temperance Bill ever introduced. But was it a temperance Bill at all?

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member cannot go into the question of the nature of the Bill. He must confine himself to the Amendment.

MR. PATRICK WHITE said that instead of going to a retail licensed house people could club together, buy a bottle of whisky and drink it at home. If this was a temperance Bill would it not bring about a corresponding diminution of the revenue of the United Kingdom?

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: The effect on the revenue of the United Kingdom is outside the Amendment.

MR. PATRICK WHITE said that all the time off-licences were to be in competition with on-licences. While they increased the taxation they did nothing to reduce the competition. That was an unfair principle.

MR. WALTER LONG: It is a matter of very great surprise to us that the Government have attempted to make no answer to the speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, who made it perfectly clear that the Amendment discloses the real policy of the Government. It is a most unfortunate thing that under our procedure an Amendment of this kind should come on at a time when naturally many Members of the Government was absent, notably the Prime Minister, and it is to be profoundly regretted that he should be absent when we are discussing and coming to a decision upon an Amendment which, without question, is one of the most important Amendments the House will be called upon to consider. What we want to discover is the object of the Government in passing this Bill. Members of the Government and their supporters state that they are actuated by no spirit of ill-feeling towards any particular trade, but that they are acting upon a high moral principle. They want to deal with an odious evil by diminishing temptation. If that is their view, why do they confine their operations solely to on-licences? What they desire is that their weaker brethren who cannot resist temptation should be made sober, not by Act of Parliament, but by having removed from their path temptations they are not strong enough to resist. Which is the stronger temptation offered to a man or woman—going into a public-house subject to inspection by the police and subject to the discipline which falls alike on the owner of the house and the holder of the licence if the law is transgressed, or the temptation of going into a place where the man's business is not to sell intoxicating liquors, whose business rests on other foundations altogether, but who is able at the same time to sell liquor in small quantities to be consumed in private without any right of entry by the police, and leading, as we all know, to a much greater amount of drunkenness than that which obtains in public-houses? My hon. and learned friend the Member for Liverpool quoted the figures about the prosecution of licence holders, and he was told that his quotation was not apposite because they were the convictions on licensed premises. Can anyone doubt that in view of the comparatively few cases of drunkenness which are traced directly to public-houses, the greater proportion is due to secret drinking? If the object of this measure is to reduce temptation, this Amendment ought to be accepted exactly as it stands. What is the argument of the Home Secretary? He says these on-licences have decreased. What on earth has that got to do with it?

We know that on-licences are decreasing under the Act of 1904. What is the real object of the Government? The whole question of temperance is swept away, and you are brought down to the simple issue that you are preparing to take away a particular class of property which you believe belongs to few people, and those few people you believe are opposed to yourselves politically. My hon. friend behind me says he hopes these licences will be dealt with within the next ten years.

MR. CAMERON CORBETT: I said before the end of fourteen years.

MR. WALTER LONG: Well, ten years is within fourteen. The House cheered my hon. friend. Could there be anything more dishonest than that cheer? What does it mean? Does it mean that hon. Gentlemen believe these licences are an evil that ought to be dealt with? Because if they do they are bound to support this Amendment. Then there was the argument about compensation. They argue that that is a question that might very well be discussed at a later period, but owing to the conditions under which we are forced to discuss this Bill, there may be no opportunity of raising it at a later stage. The whole principle which hon. Members have in view is not the extinction of licences by the payment of compensation, because that is provided for by the Act of 1904, but it is that there shall be a limit to that operation, and an extinction of licences without any compensation.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nothing of the sort. This is essentially a reduction clause and not compensation.

MR. WALTER LONG: The hon. Member's point would be reasonable if we were discussing these matters unshackled, but under the circumstances his argument cannot have any weight at all. We are now within an hour and five minutes of the time when the discussion of this clause must come to an end. The question we have to ask the Government now is, is this a *bona fide* Bill for temperance or is it not? If it is, then you should apply to all licences the same law and the same principles. If you fail to do that you stand convicted of introducing a Bill which is a sham, which is not in reality a temperance measure, which is merely intended to attack a particular trade, because you believe you can do that with greater safety than if your operations were further extended. I hope the country will take note of what has taken place to-night, and also of the fact that the Government, arraigned by the Leader of the Opposition, on the ground that their Bill has been proved to be a sham, have not had the courage to answer this attack or defend themselves. As a matter of fact, they have taken refuge in a defence which is quite untenable and they are really advocating a Bill which is an attack upon a particular trade and a particular class of individuals. By refusing this Amendment the Government will not attain what they desire, namely, to make the people more temperate and remove from their path that greatest of all temptations, namely, that which occurs under the "off" and not under the "on" licences.

*MR. JOYNSON-HICKS said that not long ago he ran the risk of an action for libel from a grocers' licence protection association upon this subject. He thought the right hon. Member for Spen Valley would do him the honour of believing that, in this matter he was strongly sincere in his feeling that off-licences were as harmful as, if not more harmful than on-licences to the sobriety of the nation. He would like to refer to a point which had been raised by the Under-Secretary to the Home Department in regard to the Peel Commission Report. He was afraid they had been somewhat misled by the quotation made from that Report. It was true that the Commission suggested a diminution of on-licences, and they allowed a period of five years, but during that period their opinion was that no new licences should be granted, and that the licensing authority should come to a decision as to how many new licences would be required. He thought they were clearly entitled to say on that Report that the Peel Commission felt there were too many grocers' licences. They felt that combinations of trade in connection with these licences ought to be removed, that there should be no new licences granted for five years, and at the end of that time obviously there was to be a diminution in the number of licences. It had been argued against this proposal that grocers' licences were diminishing under the provisions of the Act of 1904. It was perfectly true that they had diminished since that Act was passed, by about 125 out of 25,000 existing licences. but on-licences had been diminished by some 3,000 or 4,000 out of a total of 100,000. If it was a reason for not including off-licences that they had been reduced by 120 out of 25,000 *a fortiori* it was a reason for not touching the on-licences, because they had not been reduced to a far greater extent since 1904. He could not help feeling that the Home Secretary had treated the whole question of grocers' licences far too lightly. The right hon. Gentleman told them that grocers' licences were the cause of much secret drinking. He (the Home Secretary) did not think that secret drinking was due to the existence of grocers' licences, but it arose more from the innate depravity of the human mind.

MR. GLADSTONE: What I said was that the chief evil alleged in connection with grocers' licences was secret drinking.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS said he quite agreed, but the evil which the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to appreciate in all its seriousness in the same way as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley and the hon. Member for Appleby was the secret drinking by women which could be traced to the existence of grocers' licences. He had heard both of the hon. Members opposite denounce in far more effective language than he could use the evils of grocers' licences in connection with secret drinking. The hon. Member for Appleby was president of a society for the total prohibition of the liquor traffic. Here was a genuine opportunity for the hon. Gentleman and his friends to take some part in the partial and immediate suppression of a large number of grocers' licences which were part and parcel of the drink system of the country. Yet hon. Gentlemen opposite refused to take advantage of this golden opportunity. He invited the Government to explain how this Amendment could possibly "kill the Bill." There was ample time during the coming vacation for the right hon. Member for Spen Valley to draft clauses to reduce those grocers' licences, and he might without difficulty devise a much honester and more fair method of compensation than that which the Government proposed for the brewers. He wished to call the attention of the Committee a little more closely to the real evils of grocers' licences, and to the consensus of opinion regarding them among all temperance workers. From 1860 onwards, when they were first instituted by the late Mr. Gladstone, there had been a consensus of opinion in the religious and temperance world that grocers' licences had done far more harm than on-licences in encouraging drinking among women, deaths from which during the last thirty years had increased 150 per cent. The whole speech of the Home Secretary was a failure to realise the evils caused by these licences. During these thirty years insanity caused by drinking among women had largely increased. A remarkable document had been published this year as to the cause of drunkenness among women, which was admitted by all temperance and religious workers. Questions were sent out by the Church of England Temperance Society to a large number of doctors and others asking their opinion on the subject in view of the debates which were to take place on this Bill. Of those who had replied, fifteen doctors were of opinion that there was no increase, eighty-eight doctors testified to a large increase of drunkenness among leisured women, ninety-three doctors testified to a large increase among the wives of the working people of England, and a very great number of those doctors attributed this increase directly to grocers' licences. He was sure that his hon. friends on that side of the House would agree with him that there was a consensus of opinion among doctors that grocers' licences were the cause of this evil. Not only had his own church condemned in no measured terms grocers' licences, but less than two years ago the Wesleyan Conference met in London and unanimously passed a

Resolution declaring that in their opinion the promised legislation of the Government would not be satisfactory unless it dealt with the cause of the terrible increase of drunkenness among women, with its most serious and deteriorating influence on children, namely, the wine and spirit dealers' retail licences, commonly called grocers' licences, and urging upon the Government the necessity of giving the licensing authority unrestrained control over the issue and control of those licences. The late Mr. Gladstone said it was necessary to decide this question on its moral and social bearings. He was prepared to do that, and if the Government would only take off its Whips, he felt certain that an overwhelming majority of temperance members who habitually supported the Government would vote for this Amendment. They knew that, if they were to do anything really to remedy the evils of drunkenness among women they must attack grocers' licences. He challenged the Government and their supporters to show whether they were really sincere or not. Many hon. Members had more or less recently gone before their constituents and used, perhaps, what hon. Members on the other side considered rather strong language with regard to the provisions of this Bill. He himself had not hesitated to say on public platforms, and he did not hesitate to say now in the House, that this Bill, so far as its temperance aspect was concerned, was a delusion and a sham, and that it was not introduced with the view to remedying the evils of intemperance. The Government and their supporters now had an opportunity of showing whether they were sincere in the speeches they had made about the great advantages to be derived from this Bill from a temperance point of view. He was a believer in moderate reduction. though reduction was not a remedy, but only a palliative. If it was a palliative with regard to on-licences it was still more so in regard to off-licences. He appealed to hon. Members opposite who had made speeches on the temperance question to join in an effort to bring these licences into the purview of the Bill, and to prevent the Opposition from being able to say that their enthusiasm for temperance was a sham and a delusion, and that their sole reason for bringing in the Bill was to penalise their political opponents, while they dared not touch that part of the drink trade which was very largely Radical in its opinions.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.) said that the speech of the hon. Member who had just addressed the Committee had convinced him that he was not quite in sympathy with the temperance Members on either side of the House. It appeared to him that the psychology of temperance Members on the Ministerial side of the House was very much the same as that of hon. Members on the other side. There was another point of view to which he wished to refer. The attitude of every Government for many years in the framing of every Bill had been largely decided by the type of man who subscribed to their secret party funds. The brewers—he thought they were mistaken —had liberally subscribed to the funds of the Party opposite, and the trade which was dealt with in this Amendment had principally supported the party funds of the Party to which he belonged. He, in recognition of that profound evil of political corruption which had struck into our Parliamentary system more deeply than any other, would vote for the Amendment, as a protest against what he believed to be the spirit of corruption in their party politics.

*SIR GILBERT PARKER said the Committee had had an example of how the glow of moral enthusiasm could be chilled by party necessity. They had not heard from a single Member on the front bench opposite one consistent reason why off-licences should not have been dealt with in this Bill. What had been the reasons adduced? They had been that a scheme of compensation would be too difficult. Hon. Members opposite who had always been strong temperance reformers—he did not say that disparagingly; he hoped they were all temperance reformers, differing only among themselves as to methods—now said that compensation was difficult, and this was not honest, consistent, just, or straightforward. What had hon. Members been doing for twenty years? They were out of power for the greater part of that time, and they said in 1904 that they would bring in a temperance measure which would deal with the evils of drink in this country thoroughly and impartially. But what had they done? In two aspects they had not touched the evils at all, viz., secret drinking through the facilities of off-licences, and drinking in clubs. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department, who was one of the ablest Members on the Treasury bench, said that the reason why the Government could not deal with off-licences was because a scheme of compensation for them was so difficult. That was the only reason adduced that afternoon; and if it was not their only reason might the Committee expect that some of the right hon. Gentleman's colleagues would satisfy them in regard to this matter? He could not think that hon. Members on their own side of the House were satisfied with the reason given. The right hon. Member for Spen Valley, the Member for the Appleby Division, and scores of their colleagues had said over and over again in the country and in the House that off-licences ought to be dealt with because they were a crying evil which destroyed the home, debased women, and encouraged the pernicious vice of secret drinking. But when a Bill was brought in to which an hon. Member offered an Amendment providing an opportunity for giving attention to off-licences, the result was silence everywhere. He believed in the individual honesty of those temperance reformers—as apart from their party honesty—and he thought that they must be ashamed at the exhibition that afternoon of the Ministerial exposition of a Bill which was intended to produce a great political effect on the country and also morally. But that which was intended to produce a political effect conflicted with that which was intended to produce a moral effect. One reason given by the Home Secretary for not dealing with off-licences was that they were decreasing; but it had been very ably pointed out by an hon. Member on the Opposition benches, that under the 1904 Act on-licences had also been steadily decreasing. He submitted to the Committee that to offer that as a reason for not dealing with the off-licences in the Bill was to show the Minister in charge either inconsistent or incompetent. He could not think that the right hon. Gentleman was incompetent; and he preferred to say that he was inconsistent. What was the secret? The secret had been let out by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, who said that they on the Opposition Benches had been influenced by the brewers in passing the Bill in 1904, a Bill which had produced great results, and had reduced licences. If the reduction of licences was in the interest of temperance, then the 1904 Act had produced an effect on temperance throughout the country. But the hon. Member for Salford stated, what they on the Opposition side believed to be the truth, that the Government had not dealt with off-licences because it was not considered politically expedient; that they did not want to set their friends the grocers against them. If that was not the case, he trusted that some hon. Member on the front Treasury bench would state what was the real reason; because they were quite at a loss to know the actual state of the case. The hon. Member for Salford had expressed the strong detestation which they all had for the evils of secret drinking, and hon. Members opposite had applauded. What hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House wanted was that a Bill should be brought in to deal with the evils which flowed from off-licences.

AN HON. MEMBER ON THE MINISTERIAL BENCH: Why did you not deal with them in your Bill?

*SIR GILBERT PARKER said he hoped that from beginning to end of his speech he had been dealing temperately, and certainly with some sort of care, with the arguments brought forward by the supporters of the Bill. What he was saying, when interrupted, was that the deep antipathy which they had to the evils which flowed from off-licences had induced Members on the Opposition side of the House to support the Amendment, which they had confidently hoped would receive considerable support from those who had persistently said that secret drinking and other evils which flowed from off-licences ought to be dealt with radically—he did not mean radically in its political sense. He appealed to the right hon. Member for Spen Valley, to whom his Party was greatly indebted for having brought this question so prominently before the country. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on the masterful position which he had assumed; but he regretted, as he believed everybody who admired political consistency regretted, that the right hon. Gentleman had not made an appeal to the Government, even at that late hour, to deal effectively with this question of off-licences to which they had committed themselves over and over again.

*Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said that the hon. Member for Gravesend thought his Party had a monopoly of political sincerity. There was nobody on that side of the House, whatever their view might have been before, who would not vote against the Amendment to show that they had not the slightest doubt that the motives of the Treasury bench were as pure as those of the great religious and temperance organisations throughout the country which urged the Government to push forward with this Bill. The motives of the Government were entirely pure, and inspired by the love of their fellow-creatures. The hon. Member for Liverpool had asked if there was any reason why a difference should be made between on and off-licences, and how they, on that side of the House, could support the reduction of one and not of the other? He would give a reason which was so obvious that it would be accepted by the mover of the Amendment. Supposing a man was walking home and had reached within a mile of his house; he came to the open door of a public-house, went in, stopped there for some time, and when he came out he found it impossible to walk home. But suppose, instead, he went into a grocer's shop and got two bottles of beer, putting one in one pocket and another in another pocket like John Gilpin "to keep the balance true." He would find no difficulty in walking home, and when he got there he would give one bottle to his wife to drink and have the other for himself. They were both at home, and got to bed sober, and did not fall into the hands of a policeman. The hon. Member for North East Manchester doubtless was anxious to strengthen the Bill. He thought the licence holders had already had time enough and five years time limit more than ample. No wonder he had little patience with a Bill that dealt so gently with the Trade; and he was anxious to extinguish as many licences as possible, but the more moderate temperance men could not go so far.

Mr. MARKHAM, who was received with Ministerial cries of "Oh, oh" and "Divide," said he would like to state his reasons for supporting the Amendment. He did not take the Party Whip of the Liberal Party. He had never done so; and should never do so. As a temperance advocate and worker all his life he was bound to support the Amendment now before the House. He was at a loss to understand why the right hon. Member for Spen Valley did not support the Amendment, because if they turned to the Report of the Royal Commission, they found on page 157 that the right hon. Gentleman definitely recommended that all grocers' licences should be abolished after a period of five years. The great blot on this Bill was that off-licences and clubs were not included. The position with regard to clubs was ludicrous, and so far as off-licences were concerned any one who had spent his life among working men as he had must know that those off-licences were a great evil. Therefore, believing as he did that the Bill was a temperance measure, he asked why off-licences were not included in it. The Committee had been told that the Government could not deal with the whole subject at one time, that they were dealing with the on-licences now and would deal with the off-licences at another time. But in his opinion, if the Government introduced a temperance Bill they should be prepared to deal with the whole of these licences. The right hon. Member for the Spen Valley took a great deal of evidence on the matter of these licences, and there was no stronger argument in favour of the acceptance of the Amendment than the Majority Report signed by the right hon. Gentleman himself. Having been a strong temperance reformer he had not the slightest doubt of the way in which he should vote on this question.

MR. J. F. MASON said the reason given by the Home Secretary for refusing this Amendment was quite different from that given by an hon. Member earlier in the day, namely, that it was not necessary to deal with off-licences, because they had been reduced in late years. The on-licences had also been reduced since the Act of 1904. The reason given by the Home Secretary was that it was not necessary to deal with off-licences unless they acquired an enhanced value. But it was certain that as the on-licences that were left would derive an enhanced value, there was no guarantee for saying that off-licences would not do so. The fact was that this Bill did not deal with the whole matter, but with only one portion of it, and the moment the off-licences derived enhanced value they would be dealt with, and the House in the near future would be asked to face another Bill to deal with off-licences.

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 306; Noes, 126. (Division List No. 208.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hon Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Benn, W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hn. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, Sir W. Howell (Bristol, S
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H. (St.Pancras, N.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow in Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt Hn. L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, W.E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman(Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones Lief (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis

King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A.Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire,Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D.(Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M.(Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh Central)
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson,Sir GScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roch, Walter F. (Pembroke)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Rutherford, W. W.(Liverpool)
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M.(Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford))
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick,B.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennan, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A.(Glamorgan,E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R.(Wolverhampton
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Warlde, George J.
Wason, Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J.(York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W.(St. Pancras,S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.)
Banbury,Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt.Hn.G(Winchester
Barnes, G. N.
Barrie, H. T.(Londonderry,N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph PeterR.
Bertram, Julius
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R.(Marylebone,E.)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.(Worc
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E.F.(Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H.A.E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (MontgomeryCo.
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, Robt. (Lanark,Govan
Faber, Capt. W. V.(Hants,W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace

Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Haride, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, RtHn. Walter (Dublin, S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, Jn. Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
Oddy, John James
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Snowden, P.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, RtHn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tillett, Louis John
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Young, Samuel

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Faber and Mr. Joynson-Hicks.

MR. F. E. SMITH moved an Amendment providing that the licensing justices should reduce the number of on-licences "except licences for the sale of beer upon the premises which were in existence before 1869," so that at the end of fourteen years the number of those licences in any rural parish or urban area should not exceed the scale set out in the first schedule. He said that the fall of the guillotine would make it impossible for him to do more than indicate in a few words the general character of the extremely important Amendment which was in his name. It had been repeatedly said in justification of the interference of the Bill with proprietary interests that the holder of a licence possessed no statutory title to anything more than a years' enjoyment of it. He thought he could show that the Government, if they did not accept the Amendment, would be deliberately interfering with proprietary rights which were constituted under statutory sanction, and which had no limitations whatever upon them. Before 1869 licences for the sale of beer "off" the premises were in the hands, not of the licensing justices, but of the Excise authorities. It was then thought convenient to take this jurisdiction away from the Excise authorities and give it to the licensing justices, but it was felt that some concession should be made to the holders of the licences. Therefore, by a deliberate Act of Parliament and of a Liberal Government, the freehold charter was given to these beer houses, and their licences could only be withheld on four grounds, all of which were personal either to the character of the applicant or the house. The holders of the licences were given a Parliamentary freehold. From 1869 until the Bill of 1904, unless they proved bad conduct on the part of the house, or bad character on the part of the licensee no one could take away the licence. There was no question of defeasance which the right hon. Member for the Spen Valley had tried to push home, or that an annual interest was taken in the licence only. The Parliamentary freehold was given by a Liberal Government as long as the character of the holder and the character of the house was good. That was taken away in 1904 by the successors of the Parliament which had given them that Parliamentary freehold, and it was taken away by those who were responsible, if there were any continuity of Parliamentary honour, for the conditions under which it was given in the first place. The condition under which it was taken away was that no such licence should be taken away after 1904 except under compensation provisions and under circumstances provided for under that Act. Hon. Members opposite cheered the statement that under the Act of 1904 that right was taken away. There was no end to their enthusiasm for the Act of 1904—the moment it inflicted some injury. Was there no responsibility in that House? That would be a useful lesson for the Opposition in a very few years. If they were entitled to say they could take advantage of the deprivation of these rights under the Act of 1904 for a clearly expressed and universally understood consideration, what justification could they advance in 1908 for taking away licences without any consideration at all, and at the same time that they accepted that part of the Act of 1904 which helped their contention, reject the part which procured fair dealing? It was for the Government if they could to reconcile their conduct with the arguments they had used with reference to ordinary on-licences. The agreement had been repeated *ad nauseam* that those who took on-licences knew perfectly well that the grant was an annual grant. Those who took those licences and invested their money in the 1869 beer-houses, were entitled to assume that those licences would not be taken away except for one or other of those four causes. That Parliamentary undertaking to which the honour of Parliament was committed, if there was any continuity of Parliamentary obligation, had been deliberately violated. If no other justification were available for the use of the word "confiscation" the attitude of the Government towards those 1869 holders was ample justification for the language which had been used in the country, and for the result of bye-elections in the country since this Bill was introduced.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'on-licences,' to insert the words 'except licences for the sale of beer upon the premises which were in existence before the year eighteen hundred and sixty-nine.'"—(*Mr. F. E. Smith.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said that the hon. and learned Member invited them to discriminate between the ante-1869 beer-houses and other houses. To do so would be to ask them to reverse the settlement very happily arrived at by right hon. Gentlemen opposite in 1904. Thirty years ago, in 1879, a Committee of the House of Lords, no very revolutionary or confiscatory body, recommended that the ante-1869 beer-houses should be placed in all respects on the same footing as other licensed houses. In 1882, the late Mr. Ritchie, without a six-pennyworth of compensation, placed all the off-licence ante-1869 beer houses on exactly the same footing as the other off-licences. Again, in 1904, almost the last vestige of distinction was swept away, and these licences were placed on the same footing as the others. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] Well, there was a small, minute distinction about structure. These licensed houses were about 30,000 in number out of a total of 95,000 and it was obviously impossible to exempt them from the scheme. Not only did they form so large a proportion, but they were often precisely the type of house of which it was most desirable to get rid. So clearly was that so that the present licensing authorities working under the Act of 1904 referred for compensation last year 1,625 houses, of which no fewer than 956 were the very ante-1869 beer houses which this Amendment would altogether exempt. These houses had had a forty years time-limit already, and the Government saw no reason for distinguishing between them and other licensed premises.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is only under closure Resolutions like that under which we are suffering at this moment that misrepresentations so gross can be made. The Under-Secretary actually tells us that in the Act of 1904 no distinction, except a trifling one about structure, was made between the tenure of ante-1869 houses and ordinary licences. He must know that that is inaccurate. He must know that in that Act special terms of compensation were given to those houses, because they had a special tenure, and now all that distinction is to be swept away. Their tenure is to be treated as if it were precisely and exactly identical with the tenure of the ordinary licence-holder. Of course, there was no interference with the rights of these particular licence-holders, because they had special compensation corresponding to their tenure, and everybody admits, whatever their views of property may be, that with proper and adequate compensation you may take it away. Adequate and special compensation was given to these people by the Act of 1904, and that difference is absolutely swept away by the provisions of the present Bill. The hon. Gentleman might, at all events, have given us a proper defence of his policy, and not so grossly have misrepresented the Act of 1904.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 140; Noes, 354. (Division List No. 209.)

AYES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Cox, Harold
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Dension (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mooney, J. J.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Oddy, John James
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldsay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tillett, Louis John
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid.)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.

Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, Sir W.Howell(Bristol, S.
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras, N.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)

Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn, Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir(Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W.Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael

Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)

Price, Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson,Sir G.Scott (Bradf'd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roch, Walter F. (Pembroke)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.

Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant,Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G.R.(Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry

Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.SirThomas P.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

And, it being after half-past Ten of the clock, the Chairman proceeded pursuant to the Order of the House of 17th July, to put forthwith the Question on an Amendment moved by the Government of which notice had been given, and on any Questions necessary to dispose of the Business to be concluded this day.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 21, at end, to insert the words 'and for the purposes of the definition of an "urban area" a metropolitan borough shall be deemed to be a borough, and, where part of a ward of a borough or urban district is situated in one licensing district and part in another, each such part of the ward shall be treated as part of the ward with which it has the longest common boundary in the same licensing district.'"—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

Question put, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 348; Noes, 140. (Division List No. 210.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)

Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)

Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'd

Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSir J.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Francis Peter
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David (MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-C(ardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies,SirW.Howell(Bristol,S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.

Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, RtHn.Herbert John
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.SirW.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir (MerthyrTydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Sir Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G.(Leominster
Lamont, Norman

Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A.Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lever, W. H.(Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Crae, Sir George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C.B.(Leicester)
M'Laren, H.D.(Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts,Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs,Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M.(Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Sir Robert William
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price,Sir Robert J.(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.

Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts,Sir John H.(Denbighs.
Robertson,Sir GScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roch, Walter F. (Pembroke)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V.H.(Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L.(Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann,Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs,N.W.)
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D.(Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas,David Alfred(Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R.(Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W. Dudley (S'thampton
Wardle, George J.
Wason, RtHn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker,RtHn.Sir ThomasP.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond(Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J.(York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St.Pancras,S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt. Hn.G(Winchester
Barnard, E. B.
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc,Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brotherton, Edward Allen
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt.Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R.(Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,RtHn.J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates,Major E. F.(Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H.A.E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robt.(Lanark,Govan)
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V.(Hants,W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch,Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence(Kent,Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway,RtHn.Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, RtHn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Col.Charles W.(Evesham)
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J.MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore,JohnThrogmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Oddy, John James

Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. ((Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell (-Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tillett, Louis John
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Young, Samuel
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

Put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 4) BILL [LORDS] [BY ORDER].

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. MOONEY (Newry) said that this Bill which was promoted by the Irish Local Government Board, was to set up a sewage scheme for the City of Dublin, but there was no statement in the Bill as to what system of sewage was to be carried out. He objected to a procedure of this kind, because the Irish Local Government Board was in no way representative and did not hold inquiries by which the people who lived on the road through which the main sewer would be carried would have an opportunity of being heard. Since he had put his notice on the Paper, he had been in communication with the Chairman of the Dublin County Council, which was an elected body, who stated that the scheme proposed by the Bill was a proper scheme to be carried out. This, he thought, was practically giving them a blank cheque, but at the same time he did not intend to persist in his objection to the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS AND IMPROVEMENTS) BILL [LORDS] [BY ORDER.]

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

*MR. TIMOTHY DAVIES (Fulham) said that in moving the rejection of this Bill he might at once state that he objected only to Clause 13. It was perhaps rather an unusual course to take to move the rejection because of one clause of a Bill, but the London County Council had also taken an unusual course in this matter. In 1900 the United Tramways Company brought in a Bill asking powers to construct an electric tramway from Fulham to Putney, but stated that they were only able to do so by means of the overhead trolley system. The Fulham borough objected to that, and the Bill that was brought in for that purpose was not proceeded with. In the following year the London County Council entered into negotiations with the Fulham Borough and promised, under certain conditions, to bring in a Bill asking powers to construct a line on the same route as that proposed by the London United Tramways the year before. They pointed out that if they constructed it on the conduit system a great deal of street-widening and improvement would be necessary, and that they were prepared to construct a conduit system if the Fulham Borough contributed one-third of the cost of the street improvements to the extent of not more than £30,000. The Fulham Borough agreed to pay their contribution, and in

1902 a Bill was introduced embodying those conditions. The improvements were to be carried out within four years and the tramway constructed in seven. The improvements were completed, and the £30,000 paid, and now the London County Council, in order to get away from the agreement they had made with the Fulham Borough, had put this clause in the Tramway and Improvements Bill of this year in order to avoid their responsibility and the expense of laying down a conduit system. Various public meetings in Fulham had without exception condemned the action of the London County Council in bringing this matter before Parliament in the shape they had, and under these circumstances he asked that the Third Reading should be rejected.

*MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End) seconded the Motion. He considered the action of the new County Council in breaking the agreement which their predecessors had entered into with the old Fulham Borough Council, was most undesirable. The arrangement as he understood it was that the Fulham Borough were to pay £30,000 towards the street improvements, and the London County Council were to construct a conduit system of tramways. The £30,000 was subscribed by the Fulham ratepayers on that understanding, but the new borough council had agreed with the new London County Council that there should be an overhead system on this route, in return for which they were to get a certain amount of wood pavement—a bargain of no real value, because the wood pavement would have to be put down by the London County Council in any event. This was not the only case in which the London County Council had shown their incapacity for managing tramways, and he was very glad to see that they had already received a snub from the Board of Trade, who had only given them a provisional certificate for the stud system in Mile End, where it had proved a most miserable failure. It was an experiment that never ought to have been made in such an important thoroughfare, and proved the incapacity of the present majority of the Council to safeguard the interests of the ratepayers.

In reply to a point of order raised by Mr. GUINNESS,

MR. SPEAKER ruled that to raise the question of the stud system was not in order.

MR. B. S. STRAUSS said he bowed, of course, to the ruling, but had only used this as an argument to prove the want of forethought of the present London County Council. He congratulated the Board of Trade on being so cautious. He was not desirous of interfering with the development of tramways in London. They were of the utmost importance for people getting cheaply to and from their work, but the House ought to consider with some care a proposal to make an alteration in the system which it agreed a few years ago the County Council should lay down. It was quite true there had not been the necessary formal opposition in another place, but that did not prevent hon. Members emphatically protesting against the absolute incapacity of the new majority to carry out the work in a fit and proper way. They did not desire to interfere in any way with the general principle of the Bill; their objection only referred to the possibility of establishing the overhead system. One of the first principles of commercial morality was that an agreement properly made should be kept. The London County Council some years back made this agreement, and they had not adhered to it. He feared they might put down a system which would be not only a failure, but a detriment to the rateable value of the district through which it ran, and he thought the House should only pass the Bill on the clear understanding that this section would not be enforced. He appealed to county councillors who happened to be Members to remember that they owed a very serious responsibility to the ratepayers of London with regard to the system of tramways, and he hoped and trusted that the House would emphatically lay down that the conduit system, which was the most efficient and economical, should be the system in London. He firmly believed the day was not far distant when the ratepayers would rise against these continual experiments in tramway running. They were satisfied with the present system which was laid down in the majority of the streets, and he hoped the painful experience in his own constituency would be taken to heart, and that they would not run the risk of repeating it.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day three months.'"—(*Mr. Timothy Davies.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) said the hon. Member for Mile End had treated the House to a disquisition on the surface-contact system of electric traction, apparently being afraid that it was to be brought into Fulham. The system was tried, as an experiment, from Aldgate to Bow Bridge, because the Stepney Borough Council would not consent to the overhead system and owing to the Bow and Whitechapel Railway running just under the roadway the conduit system was impossible except at very great expense. The clause to which the hon. Member objected only enabled the County Council for the purpose of tramway No. 5 to adopt such a system of overhead electric traction as the Board of Trade might sanction. He did not think it could possibly be extended to cover the surface-contact system, and he hoped the House would not agree to the postponement of the Third Reading of the Bill. It was important to remember that this tramway was only part of a large system, and would supply a link between Hammersmith Broadway in the north and Putney in the south. It would enable the inhabitants of Fulham to go northwards to Harlesden, and thus connect them with three lines running east and west along the Harrow, Goldhawk, and Uxbridge Roads. These four lines were on the overhead system, and it would obviously cause a great inconvenience if in this case they were to have the conduit system joining them up. The County Council was accused of a breach of contract. The tramway was authorised on the conduit system in 1902, but since then the County Council had come to an agreement with the three borough councils involved who had waived their objection to the overhead system in return for certain concessions, the chief of which was the laying down of wood paving instead of granite setts between the tramways. The hon. Member for Mile End had complained that the borough council of Fulham was to be compelled to contribute an unusual amount. He believed one-third was the usual amount contributed, and, considering the benefit which would be derived, he thought it was the least they could pay in return for the improvement, which their deputy town clerk had stated was very necessary. If it was not allowed it would inflict a great hardship on the county in general, and on Fulham in particular. The hon. Member for Fulham, in his evidence before the Committee in 1902, said the population had grown from 40,000 to 140,000 in twenty years and therefore the tramway was necessary, and he also showed that there was no danger of property being deteriorated, because the greater part of the property in Fulham Palace Road was only of a rateable value of from £35 to £60. The borough would be benefited no less by having the overhead system, because after all they were not going to have posts in the middle of the road but only at the side, and there would be no obstruction to traffic. The hon. Member also said there had been a great many meetings held and in every case it had been resolved to oppose the Bill. He had apparently forgotten the meetings of the borough council, and if they were satisfied that was all the House of Commons need ask. The previous borough council certainly came to a different decision, but since then the electors had had their voice in the matter. It was quite unreasonable to expect the House to listen to the complaint of a few ratepayers. If the ratepayers were dissatisfied they could easily induce those who had the frontage to oppose the Bill in Committee. It was very unsuitable to raise this matter on the Third Reading. If the Motion was agreed to it would put off this and other very necessary improvements for an indefinite period. He hoped the House would not assent to the Motion and postpone the building of tramways urgently needed in the interests of the traffic of London.

MR. WATERLOW (Islington, N.), as one of the members of the Highways Committee of the County Council responsible for the Bill, was sorry to say he must support the last speaker in opposition to the Member for Fulham. He asked the House to pass the Bill, because it included a large number of other tramway improvements in London which would be wrecked for twelve months if the hon. Member's proposition was complied with. There were two issues in the matter. There was the question of the bargain which was agreed to with Fulham, and the question of the overhead and the conduit systems on its merits. With reference to the bargain, it was made with the borough council. The original Bill of 1902 was an agreed Bill with the borough council, and the bargain was one as to certain widenings at a total cost of £90,000, of which Fulham agreed to contribute £30,000, and the County Council the balance. These widenings had practically been effected, and, therefore, so far as Fulham was concerned, what they paid the £30,000 for they had now got in the form of widenings. The bargain was embodied in the Bill of 1904, but the two bodies had now agreed to vary the bargain, and the result was that this Bill had been introduced. If the borough council had objected to this Bill they could have objected to it on the Standing Orders, and this particular clause would never have come before the House. But they did not object. On its merits it was advisable to have the overhead system instead of the conduit system in this particular case. They had two miles of overhead system running from Hammersmith to Willesden already completed and in operation. The continuation of that line was from Hammersmith to Fulham and over Putney Bridge. If they forced the County Council to put down the conduit system there it would link up with two overhead systems, and the position would be perfectly ridiculous. They would not be able to have the necessary through traffic without a change of system at Hammersmith, which would be most awkward and inconvenient to everybody concerned.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

REGISTRATION BILL [H.L.].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1:

MR. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks) moved an Amendment which he understood was accepted by the Government. It carried out what he believed was the agreement arrived at when the Bill was last under discussion.

Amendment proposed—

> " In page 1, line 21, to leave out the words ' the said.' "—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed—

> " In page 1, line 21, after the word ' section,' to insert the words ' 42 of the said Act.' "—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) asked the hon. and learned Gentleman if he could give an answer to the conundrum put to him as to what was to happen if a person did not approve of the statement prepared by the registrar.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) said that these words occurred in the section of the Act, and the reason why they had been introduced in this Bill was because they had formed part of the law for the last twenty years.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2, and schedule agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

GRAND JURY (IRELAND) ACT (1836) AMENDMENT BILL.

Order for the Second Reading read.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) said that this Bill sought to amend the Grand Jury (Ireland) Act of 1836. Under that Act Grand Juries were entitled to spend £300 upon piers and harbours, and that was the limit. Of course, at that time the value of money was quite different from what it was now, and this Bill sought to extend that limit and make the maximum allowed to be spent £1,500 instead of £300. This demand had been made by almost every county council on the seaboard of Ireland, and in the past it had often been a very great hardship that many small works could not be undertaken because the county councils had no power to provide more than £300. The Bill would enable the county councils, if they desired, to spend up to £1,500, and besides this the Agricultural Department could co-operate with a great many county councils to carry out public works which would be of great benefit to the inhabitants living on the sea-coast. He begged to move the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) said that, on the face of it, it was a misnomer to call this measure the Grand July (Ireland) Act (1836) Amendment Bill. To look at the title no one would think it had anything to do with piers and harbours. The Grand Jury Act of 1836 had 186 clauses and referred to a great many other matters besides piers and harbours. It had nineteen schedules attached to it, and under those circumstances he thought they might find a more appropriate name for the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the only people who would be benefited by the Bill were those in North Antrim and the South and West of Ireland. [Cries of "No, no."] Well, he would like to know what other parts of Ireland were going to benefit by the Bill. What about County Down and other parts of Ireland which had not been mentioned? The sum of £500 looked very well in Clause 1, but what about Clause 2 which appeared to be a contradiction of Clause 1? Clause 2 provided that where the Department proposed to contribute to the expenses of any work undertaken by a county council under the Bill the Department might for the purposes of this Act enter into an agreement with the county council to contribute the sums mentioned in the agreement. He would like to know if under that provision it would be possible for the Department to grant the whole of the money. Clause 67 of the original Act limited the amount of money to be contributed to one-third, and Clause 1 of this Bill provided that the one-third limit which used to be £300 was to be extended to £1,500. This was a legal point, and he regretted that no Law Officer of the Crown was present to answer it. Perhaps the Chief Secretary for Ireland would be able to tell them whether or not Clause 2 was a contradiction of Clause 1. He would like to know what the real meaning of this provision was. There was something behind the Bill, and he would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether the proposals it contained had his consent and whether it was not a fact that Clause 2 was a contradiction of Clause 1.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) asked whether the £1,500, which was a large increase on the amount in the principal Act, was a charge which would recur, and, if so, how often. Had it reference to one set of work in one county?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL was understood to indicate that that was not so.

MR. CARLILE said the right hon. Gentleman indicated that that was the case, and, therefore, the amount involved in one county would only extend to £1,500 at one time.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: For one piece of work.

MR. CARLILE said he understood that the Department could involve the county council in the expense of separate pieces of work by making a contribution of one-third of the amount required. The county council would in that way be involved in two-thirds of the cost.

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said that was not so. The Department did not involve the county council in any sum of money until it was asked by the county council to contribute.

MR. CARLILE said that that was a satisfactory explanation. A county council might be involved in considerable expenditure, but only on its own motion, and not at the instance of the Department. That was a point about which he wished to be quite clear. He thought the local authority should be trusted with the responsibility of carrying out the work. They would have every inducement to see that it was properly done seeing that they had to meet the major portion of the outlay.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for to-morrow.—(*Mr. T. W. Russell.*)

NAVAL LANDS (VOLUNTEERS) BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order for the Second Reading read.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.) in moving the Second Reading, said that the Bill was absolutely uncontroversial. It was to extend to the Naval Volunteer Reserves the conditions which applied under the Military Lands Act to the Volunteer Force. The Bill empowered Naval Volunteers to borrow money, to acquire land, and to erect works for the purpose of their service. It would also enable local authorities to borrow money for the same purposes.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," —(*Mr. McKenna,*)—put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. McKenna.*)

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER, pursuant to the Order of the House of 10th July, adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at thirteen minutes before Twelve o'clock.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CXCII.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) House of Lords.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Appellate Jurisdiction [H.L.]	*Lord Chancellor*	Report 9th July (32) Read 3^a and passed 13th July (350)
*Bee Pest (Ireland)	*Lord Denman*	Read 1^a 16th July (996)
*Commons [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Committee 21st July (1659)
Coroners (Ireland)	*Earl of Donoughmore*	Read 2^a 16th July (997) Committee 21st July (1668)
*Costs in Criminal Cases		Read 1^a 26th July (996)
*Crans Measures [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 1^a 14th July (540)
Crofting Parishes (Scotland) [H.L.]		Report 15th July (824) Read 3^a and passed 16th July (998)
*Endowed Schools (Masters) [H.L.]	*Earl Beauchamp*	Committee } 9th July (32) Report } Read 3^a and passed 14th July (579)
*Evicted Tenants (Ireland) [H.L.]	*Earl of Crewe*	Report 14th July (577) Read 3^a and passed 15th July (824)
*Friendly Societies	*Lord Denman*	Read 1^a 20th July (1333)
*Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland)	*Lord Denman*	Read 1^a 13th July (313) Read 2^a 21st July (1671)
Importation of Plumage Prohibition		Committee 16th July (996) Report 20th July (1433) Read 3^a and passed 21st July 1679)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Isle of Man (Customs Duties)		Read 1ª 14th July (539)
Land Values (Scotland)		Read 3ª and passed 9th July (14)
Law of Distress (Amendment)	*Lord Courtney of Penwith*	Read 2ª 14th July (571)
Local Authorities (Admission of the Press)	*Earl of Donoughmore*	Read 2ª 9th July (19)
Municipal Franchise (Mercantile Corporations and Companies) [H.L.]	*Lord Avebury*	Read 2ª 14th July (540) Committee 21st July (1656)
Nurses Registration [H.L.]	*Lord Ampthill*	Committee } 21st July (1638) Report }
*Old-age Pensions	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1ª 10th July (213) Read 2ª 20th July (1335)
*Poisons and Pharmacy	*Earl of Crewe*	Committee 14th July (549) Report 21st July (1653)
Police Superannuation	*Lord Newton*	Read 2ª 9th July (34) Committee } 13th July (351) Report } Read 3º passed 14th July (579)
*Post Office Savings Bank	*Earl of Granard*	Read 1ª 14th July (539) Read 2ª 16th July (997) Committee } 20th July (1433) Report } Read 3ª passed 21st July (1679)
Post Office Sites [H.L.]	*Earl of Granard*	Report 9th July (3) Read 3ª and passed 13th July (313)
*Public Health (Markets in Rural Places)	*Lord Allendale*	Read 2ª 9th July (33) Committee } 13th July (350) Report } Read 3ª passed 15th July (824)
Public Houses (Extension of Facilities) [H.L.]	*Lord Leamington*	Read 1ª 21st July (1638)
*Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland)	*Lord Denman*	Read 1ª 15th July (763)
*Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland.)	*Lord Denman*	Read 2ª 14th July (578) Committee 21st July (1669)
Telegraph Construction	*Earl of Granard*	Read 1ª 15th July (763)
*Territorial and Reserve Forces Forces [H.L.]	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1ª 20th July (1433)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Thrift and Credit Bank [H. L.]	*Lord Wenlock*	Committee 9th July (3)
Tobacco Growing (Scotland)	*Earl of Camperdown*	Read 2^a 16th July (996) Committee } Report } 20th July (1433)
Whale Fisheries (Ireland)		Read 1^a 15th July (763)
Wild Birds	*Lord Balfour of Burleigh*	Read 1^a 14th July (539) Read 2^a 21st July (1655)

(B.) HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Agricultural Holdings [H.L.]	*Sir Edward Strachey*	Read 1^o 9th July (98)
Army Council	*Mr. Haldane*	Bill withdrawn 13th July (536)
*Bee Pest (Ireland)	*Mr. Russell*	Read 2^o 10th July (267) Committee 13th July (530) Report } Read 3^o and passed } 15th July (976)
*Building Operations (Engineering Works	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 1^o 15th July (875)
Companies [H.L.]		Read 2^o 16th July (1219) Committee 17th July (1327)
*Costs in Criminal Cases	*Sir S. Evans*	Report } Read 3^o and passed } 15th July (981)
Deaths, Registrations, and Burials		Read 1^o 20th July (1509)
*Endowed Schools (Masters)		Read 1^o 21st July (1739)
*Evicted Tenants [H.L.]		Read 1^o 20th July (1508)
*Expiring Law	*Mr. Hobhouse*	Read 1^o 20th July (1509)
*Fatal Accidents (Damages)	*Sir H. Kearley*	Read 2^o 10th July (259) Committee } Report } Read 3^o and passed } 13th July (536)
*Finance	*Mr. Lloyd George*	Committee 14th July (625) Committee 15th July (875)
Friendly Societies	*Mr. Runciman*	Report } Read 3^o and passed } 16th July (1216)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Grand Jury (Ireland) (1836) Amendment	*Mr. Russell*	Read 1° 15th July (875) Read 2° 20th July (1859)
Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland)	*Mr. Hogan*	Report Read 3° and passed } 10th July (275)
Irish Education Act (1892) Amendment		Read 1° 14th July (625)
*Isle of Man (Custom Duties)	*Mr. Hobhouse*	Read 2° 10th July (308) Committee Report Read 3° and passed } 13th July (529)
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*Naval Lands (Volunteers)	*Mr. McKenna*	Read 1° 14th July (625) Read 2° 21st July (1862)
*Naval Marriages	*Mr. McKenna*	Read 1° 13th July (424)
*Old-age Pensions	*Mr. Lloyd-George*	Read 3° and passed 9th July (106)
Patents and Designs [H.L.]	*Sir H. Kearley*	Committee Report Read 3° and passed } 10th July (266)
Political Offenders (Punishment)		Read 1° 20th July (1509)
*Post Office Savings Bank	*Mr. Buxton*	Report Read 3° and passed } 13th July (536)
Post Office Sites [H.L.]	*Mr. Buxton*	Read 1° 16th July (1111)
Property and Deceased Persons (Disclosure)	*Mr. Bottomley*	Read 1° 14th July (625)
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Registration [H.L.]	*Mr. W. Robson*	Read 1° 9th July (98) Read 2° 16th July (1215) Committee 17th July (1323) Committee 21st (1858)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress
Salmon, Trout and River Tweed Fisheries		Read 1° 13th July (424)
*Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland)	*Mr. Birrell*	Read 2° 13th July (528) Committee Report Read 3° passed } 14th July (759)
*Small Holdings and Allotments [H.L.]	*Sir E. Strachey*	Read 1° 9th July (98)
*Summary Jurisdiction (Scotland)	*Mr. T. Shaw*	Read 1° 9th July (99)
*Telegraph Construction	*Mr. Buxton*	Report Read 3° passed } 14th July 759)
Town Tenants	*Mr. Dickinson*	Read 1° 15th July (875)
*Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland)	*Mr. Birrell*	Read 2° 15th July (983)
*Whale Fisheries (Ireland)	*Mr. Russell*	Read 2° 10th July (269) Committee 13th July (531) Report Read 3° passed } 14th July (759)
Wild Birds	*Sir F. Banbury*	Read 2° 10th July (307) Committee Report Read 3° passed } 13th July (536)

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TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[AUTHORISED EDITION].

TENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

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Where in the Index * is added with Reading of a Bill, or a Vote in Committee of Supply, it indicates that no Debate took place on that stage of the Bill, or on that Vote.

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